

# KANSAS

*Wildlife & Parks*

MAY/JUNE 2005

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# On Point

by Mike Hayden



## Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve

Of the 140 million acres of tallgrass prairie that once covered North America's heartland, only four percent remains. And two-thirds of what's left is in Kansas, mainly in the Flint Hills region. Recently steps were taken to ensure that nearly 11,000 acres of the Flint Hills are permanently protected and available to the public. In November 1996 Congress created the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve (TPNP) near Cottonwood Falls. The preserve, formerly known as the Z Bar Ranch, was owned by the National Park Trust until recently. The National Park Service owned 32 acres but managed the entire acreage cooperatively with the National Park Trust.

Last February, the newly formed Kansas Park Trust assumed ownership of the preserve. The Trust's members include Governor Kathleen Sebelius, former Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker, television journalist Bill Kurtis, former Secretary of the USDA Dan Glickman, and me. As part of the deal, the Kansas Park Trust transferred ownership to The Nature Conservancy, which manages natural resource properties worldwide. The Kansas Park Trust remains involved in promoting TPNP and securing funding for future activities. Our immediate attention is focused on getting a visitors' center built. Members of the Kansas Park Trust will be working with Kansas' congressional delegation to secure more money for construction. About \$500,000 in federal money is already allocated for design of the center. Also, under the new agreement, the National Park Service will continue to manage the property.

A generous gift from the estate of a Wellington couple, Frank and Frances Horton, helped facilitate the involvement of The Nature Conservancy. Various challenges have kept TPNP from becoming the type of venue it was originally envisioned to be. The transfer of ownership to The Nature Conservancy through the Kansas Park Trust doesn't mean everything will happen overnight. It will still take a lot of hard work and time to realize the vision, and the Kansas Park Trust doesn't want to make false promises. Our goal is to ensure that the preserve is protected in perpetuity for the American people.

TPNP is key to increasing travel and tourism in the Flint Hills, which is a goal the Kansas Department of Commerce's Travel and Tourism Division is currently

working toward. Commerce has contracted with FERMATA, Inc., a nationally recognized tourism and rural economic development consultant, to develop a strategic plan as part of the Governor's effort to work with local stakeholders to responsibly develop the potential of the Flint Hills.

Those of us who have been involved with TPNP hope the property will provide outdoor recreation, as well as historical and ecological education opportunities. As mentioned above, a visitors' center is one of the priorities to make this grassland treasure more accessible to the public. Additional ideas include having living history events at the 19th century ranch headquarters, restoring a bison herd, and developing opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and primitive camping. Also, KDWP is working on plans for public fishing in property's ponds and stream.

Until now, most of the 17,500 annual visitors have spent a limited amount of time and money in the nearby towns of Strong City and Cottonwood Falls. Once TPNP has the amenities needed to draw tourists, the local economies should also benefit. There will be opportunities for local entrepreneurs to develop services to cater to TPNP visitors. The support of the local people and communities is essential to its long-term success.

While much emphasis is being given to the economic development potential of the TPNP, it is critically important to remember that aside from any economic gain, it is our responsibility to conserve the unique tallgrass ecosystem. Numerous species of grasses, wildflowers, and wildlife are dependent on tallgrass habitat, including the greater prairie chicken, a native treasure. Other species listed on the state's species in need of conservation or threatened and endangered lists, including the Topeka shiner and Henslow's sparrows, also make their home in the Flint Hills. Much of the prairie has either succumbed to, or is increasingly threatened by commercial and residential development, habitat fragmentation, overuse of burning and herbicides, overgrazing, and invasive species such as sericea lespedeza and Eastern red cedar. Clearly, we must act now to wisely manage what remains.



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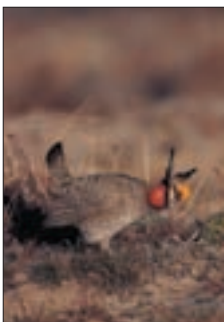
NEW MODERN SERVICE FACILITIES

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OUTDOOR FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

30



**Front Cover:** Prairie chickens symbolize our precious remaining grasslands. Mike Blair filmed this lesser chicken in Kiowa County with a 600mm lens, f/5.6, @1/125th sec. **Back:** F.I.S.H. waters offer excellent fishing. Blair filmed this successful FISH angler using a 35 mm lens, f/6.3, @1/500th sec.



**Editorial Creed:** To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

**Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave., Topeka, KS 66612.**

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# Prairie Dance

by J. Mark Shoup  
*associate editor, Pratt*

photos by Mike Blair

*Stand before the open prairie on a calm spring morning, and you might be fortunate enough to hear the timeless “boom” of prairie chickens as they participate in their annual rite of courtship. Lucky for us, Kansas is the best place in the world to hear and witness this captivating display.*

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Of all natural sounds that echo across the Great Plains, one of the most moving is the melodious, almost melancholy chant of prairie chickens “booming.” While booming is the common term, it fails to capture the pensive yet rhapsodic quality of this most unusual bird’s mating call. To anthropomorphize, imagine a clansman in full bagpipe regalia — kilt, plaid doublet, and feather bonnet — marching atop a sparse Scottish hilltop, his finest bass drone haunting the landscape.

While both displays are colorful and enchanting, that of the prairie chicken is necessary for its very existence. But the process that produces the bagpipe’s dirge is much like that of the prairie chicken’s booming. Brightly colored air sacs on each side of the bird’s neck inflate, and air is then exhaled through the voice box, producing the unique call referred to as booming.

About five years ago, I had the good fortune to witness this incredible display at point-blank range. Randy Rodgers, KDWP upland bird research biologist at Hays, had been following the movements of chickens in Gove and surrounding counties. The most interesting thing about his search was that he had discovered an expanded range of both lesser and greater prairie chickens, the two species found in Kansas. More fascinating yet, he had discovered something never before seen in the world — greater and lesser chickens on the same lek (a “booming ground” used for this mating ritual). Not only were lessers and greater using the same lek, males of the two species would commonly engage in combat although they rarely interbreed.

I had to see this, so I met Rodgers in Hays about 2 a.m. one chilly spring morning for the long drive to Gove County, where he had a blind prepared on a lek. *Hays Daily News* writer and photographer Steve Hausler met us at the site well before daybreak. Rodgers situated us in the blind and then left to drive the country side, listening for new booming grounds.

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Hausler proved to be an amiable blind companion, and we chatted quietly for an hour or so in the predawn light. It was about 6 a.m., and I was starting to shiver when the first birds landed a few feet from the blind. The shortgrass prairie came alive with rhythmic droning of the birds. I instantly forgot my brief chill. As the dawn broke, the birds rapidly drummed the earth with their feet, bobbed their heads, and strutted within their territorial borders, occasionally approaching an invisible line that resulted in a leaping, kicking dispute, then recession to the center of home turf.

There were clearly lessers and greater on display, and I soon began to discern the difference in their bagpipes. The lesser's call has a more bubbling quality interspersed by short cack, cack, cack sounds while the greater's call is a longer, deeper, more drawn out drone (like blowing into a soda bottle) with a more sharply interspersed ca-EEE-cack-cack.

The physical appearance was easy to distinguish as the males displayed, the most obvious difference being color and size of the sacs. The lesser's air sac is smaller and pinkish red compared to the larger, bright orange sac of the greater. Conversely, the lesser's bright yellow eye patches are much more pronounced than the greater's.

In courtship dance, however, the two perform identical steps, stamping the ground in circles, head down, which creates a clearly audible drumming sound. And both strut and boom

between drumming.

The spectacle lasted about an hour and one-half, with the birds often literally in reach of the blind, but Hausler and I were so enrapt it seemed like only minutes. Sooner than we wished, the birds left and Rodgers returned, having discovered three new leks

while we sat in the blind.

The prairie chicken has been much studied in Kansas, as befits such a fascinating bird. Although the lesser chicken has declined greatly in much of the Great Plains, it appears to be doing well in Kansas. Unlike some neighboring states, Kansas has con-



The greater prairie chicken, top, is distinguished by the yellow/orange air sac, and a darker colored barring. The lesser is smaller, has lighter brown barring, and the air sac is colored rusty to rosy red. The lesser's eyebrows are also more pronounced.



Defense of lek territories is mostly display and posturing, but occasionally there is contact and feathers fly. These two lesser males have connected in beak-to-beak combat.



tinued a restricted hunting season on this species with no effects on populations. Regulated hunting pressure has never been identified as a limiting factor in prairie chicken populations.

The history of the prairie chicken in Kansas is fascinating and not unlike many other game species. Prior to settlement of the plains, the lesser chicken's range in Kansas covered slightly more than the southwestern quarter of the state. The greater's range included the rest of the state, with ranges overlapping, but greater chicken density was higher in eastern portions of the state than in the west.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, few game laws were enforced, and market hunting took its toll. The prairie chicken was not immune to this trend. According to former Kansas Fish and Game Commission (now KDWP) biologist Gerald Horak's extensive study, *Kansas Prairie Chickens*, "One large New York

establishment sold 2,400 prairie chickens daily during the 1878 Christmas holiday." By 1891, the birds were on the decline, and by 1905, a statewide limit of 15 was established. This was lowered to 12 in 1911, but the birds continued to decline. In the 1920s, market hunting was abolished. In the ensuing years, populations fluctuated, and limits and seasons changed from year to year.

Market hunting was not the only factor in early prairie chicken decline. While initial disruption of the prairie by plowing and planting of agricultural crops increased chicken populations, further cultivation resulted in reduced habitat, compounding the birds' problems. Only in the Flint Hills, where rocky soil and rich pasture land discouraged widespread cultivation, did prairie chicken populations remain fairly stable. However, with the 1930s came drought and overgrazing, and even in this region the chicken was affected.

During the "Dirty Thirties," the greater prairie chicken was virtually eliminated from western Kansas.

During the ensuing years, hunting seasons fluctuated greatly. From 1931-35, the season only lasted two days. From 1936-40 it was closed altogether. Brief openings followed, but the season was closed again from 1944-50 and from 1953-56. Still, the populations did not increase until after a long drought in the 1950s, supporting the theory that weather and habitat, not hunting, drive game populations. By 1960, the chicken population was on the increase.

In 1957, prairie chicken research began in earnest and continued through the 1970s and continues still. Biologists have collected data through a number of methods, including hunter surveys, field interviews with hunters, rural mail carrier surveys, booming ground routes, summer brood counts, hunter

check stations, hunter field bag checks, and collection of wing/tail feathers from hunters. Birds have also been trapped, banded, and tracked. Every portion of the prairie chicken's range has been included in these studies.

The research covered more than just bird numbers. Vegetative analysis and grassland and cropland use were studied in detail, revealing dozens of plants species, soil types, and weather conditions that most benefit chickens.

These studies also revealed much natural history. Perhaps the most fascinating is the use of leks. Although once thought to be strictly a mating ground, it is now known that male chickens return to leks frequently throughout the year to maintain territories essential in attracting

females during peak lek usage in the spring breeding period. If a male fails to maintain this territorial dominance, another male will to replace it.

While lek usage is year-round, two peaks occur — in April and October. Booming displays are the dominant activity in April, with males appearing for about two hours at sunrise and returning each evening to the same territory. Males defend their territories — which may range from 400 to 1,400 square feet — with ferocity, kicking like fighting cocks at younger males that have yet to establish a territory on the lek.

The booming of the prairie chicken is an eerie sound that may be heard at least a mile away. The male booms both to attract females and deter male rivals. This activity is most

intense in April, slowly decreasing into June. Interestingly, mating does not appear to happen frequently on the lek, perhaps because the male is too busy trying to fend off competing paramours.

After mating, the female lays a clutch, averaging about 10 eggs. Nests are usually in well-drained upland areas not far from the lek. Vegetation around the nest must be thick enough to conceal it from predators but not so thick as to restrict movement of the chicks once they hatch. A mix a native grasses usually provides the best nesting habitat.

According to Horak, range managers who want optimal prairie chicken nesting habitat should use two techniques: 1) moderate to light grazing to create proper vegetative height and density, as well as edge, and 2) burning every third or fourth year to prevent buildup of excess plant material. Burning too frequently, however, can result in lower quality nesting cover. The same is true for overgrazing.

Ideal chicken habitat includes 75 percent grassland and 25 percent cropland. Leks are usually found on elevated hilltops with very short grass. They typically cover less and five acres.

Several other interesting facts have been revealed by study of prairie chickens. One is that they need little water. In normal years, they glean all the moisture they need from dew and the insects, seeds, and plants they eat. In addition to crops,



When a hen saunters through the lek, the display and booming activity will increase to a feverish pitch. Hens select a dominant male, whose territory will usually be near the center the lek. Breeding may occur on the ground, but normally happens away from the lek.

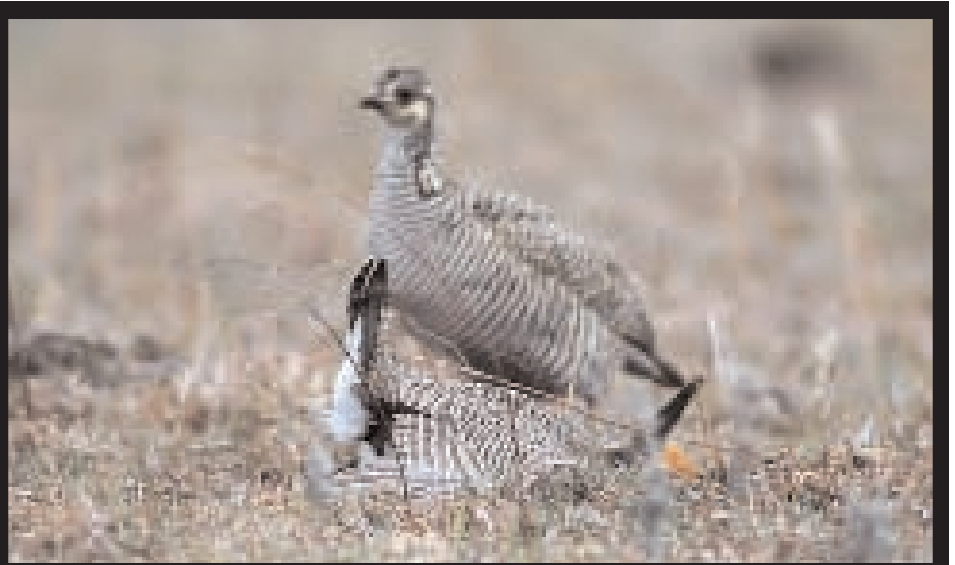


favorite foods also include native plants such as leadplant, annual ragweed, Illinois bundleflower, and roundhead lespedeza. Chickens may live as long as five years in the wild, a long time for a prey species. Chickens prefer to winter in grasslands close to grainfields. When not feeding, they loaf near roosting areas. On average, the chicken's range is less than one square mile.

While not what it was before settlement by humans, today's Kansas prairie chicken populations are the largest and healthiest in the nation. Greater prairie chickens range throughout the Flint Hills region, and into the northwestern portions of the state.

This does not mean that all is perfectly well with greater chickens, however.

"The trend for greater prairie chickens east of the Flint Hills is in decline," said Roger Applegate, KDWP small game research biologist from Emporia. "Habitat is highly fragmented with some areas that still have



This male drops low, wings extended, while in display as a hen approaches. To select this male as a suitor, the hen will step on its back.

birds. Urbanization and woody encroachment has reduced much of this area's chicken habitat. I like to say this area is becoming western Missouri."

The Flint Hills populations are being monitored closely, according to Applegate. "The Flint Hills are stable at best," he said, "perhaps slightly declining in some areas. While the habitat is intact, annual burning and

overgrazing can be problematic in portions of this area. Part of the problem is burning close to April 1, because you're getting very close to the time when hens will want to nest. If the range hasn't been burnt early enough to allow regrowth of nesting habitat, the birds are in trouble."

The good news, Applegate added, is that Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plantings have helped greater expand their modern-day range to the north and west of the Flint Hills.

Randy Rodgers, KDWP's upland bird biologist in Hays, echoed Applegate's sentiments regarding CRP.

"Both greater and lesser prairie chicken populations have increased significantly in western Kansas in response to CRP grasslands," Rodgers said. "These grasslands tend to be roughly shin-to-thigh high and bunchy, just what chickens prefer. We're working to get more broad-leaved plants in these grasslands to diversify and



J. Mark Shoup photo

A sight rarely seen before – a male lesser, left, and a male greater on the right on the same lek. This photo was taken in Gove County. Both greater and lessers have taken advantage of CRP grasslands in western Kansas, and expanded their ranges.

improve the habitat even more.”

Rodgers added that because of greater moisture in central and eastern Kansas, CRP grasslands are usually too tall and thick for chickens to use. He agrees with Applegate’s assessment of the Flint Hills situation, and adds that many Kansas prairies, such as those of the Smoky Hills, are seldom if ever burned, leaving them vulnerable to tree invasion.

“Too little burning also degrades the habitat and, if allowed to go too far, will cause chickens to abandon these areas. What chickens need is something in between these extremes. Controlled burning once in three years or twice in five years in eastern Kansas would be ideal. In central and western Kansas, fire once every four to six years is about right. A mosaic of burned

and unburned pastures is most desirable.”

The lesser chicken range is approximately what it was prior to settlement, but ranging slightly farther north and not quite as far east. This recent northward expansion is optimistic news for this species.

Prairie chickens are not heavily hunted today, even though the seasons are long. Greater chicken hunter numbers peaked in 1960 at 57,500. That year, an estimated 43,000 birds were taken. The actual peak harvest, however, occurred in 1982, when 53,100 hunters took an estimated 109,000 birds. By 2003, the number of greater prairie chicken hunters had dropped to 7,740, and they took approximately 14,810 birds.

A similar trend can be seen in

lesser prairie chicken hunting. In 1982, some 3,400 hunters took an estimated 6,200 lessers. In 2003, only 503 lesser chicken hunters went afield, harvesting approximately 380 birds.

I shot my first prairie chicken in 1988 on Kanopolis Wildlife Area. We were set up next to some large round hay bails next to a soybean field, and I will never forget how fast those birds came in. (with the right tailwind chickens might fly more than 50 miles per hour.) I still don’t know how I got on that bird, but the distance from where it folded and landed must have been 50 yards. Bird in hand, however, I knew I had something special. Although not as colorful as a pheasant or a mallard, the bird’s unique composition, with feathered feet; crested, hornlike feathers, called pinnae; and bright orange air sacs made this one truly unique bird. And while some say its meat is a bit wild, I found that I like it far better than any upland game.

While a prairie chicken in hand is a prize indeed, viewing them on the lek is an experience like none other. Although opportunities to view chickens on the lek are limited, they can be found. In eastern Kansas, opportunities are currently restricted to private property, mostly in the Flint Hills, where permission must be obtained. To view lesser prairie chickens, contact the Cimarron National Grasslands at 620-697-4621. The U.S. Forest Service will have two blinds set up for public viewing this spring.

Experience it. You’ll find there’s nothing like these little bagpipers of the prairie. ♡



# F.I.S.H.: A PLACE TO FISH



by Kyle Austin  
fisheries management  
coordinator, Pratt  
photos by Mike Blair

*Kansas anglers prefer to fish in ponds and streams, and that's exactly what the Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitat (F.I.S.H.) program provides. Pond and stream access is leased from landowners and opened up public fishing.*

There are just 189,000 acres of public fishing water in Kansas. And that amount looks smaller when you consider that only 15 percent of it consists of streams or impoundments less than 1,000 acres in size, which according to surveys, is where most Kansas anglers prefer to fish.

To address this deficiency, a pilot fishing access program, "F.I.S.H." (An acronym for Fishing Impoundments and Stream Habitats), was initiated in 1998. F.I.S.H. was designed to increase public fishing opportunities through cooperation with pri-

vate landowners. The following year, the program was expanded statewide and was accepted as a reimbursable federal aid grant. F.I.S.H. offers landowners a per-acre fee for providing public access to impounded waters, or a sliding-scale fee for access to streams. The sliding-scale fee is based upon the quality and quantity of stream habitat. Lease fees, in addition to other provisions such as mowed or graveled parking areas, portable metal fence stiles, signage and law enforcement, provide incentives for landowner participation.

# FISH

FISHING IMPOUNDMENT AND STREAM HABITATS

**ACCESS SITE**

**OPEN DATES**

**March 1**

**October 31**





Each year, a fishing atlas is published by KDWP outlining each body of water enrolled in the program. The atlas index provides anglers with information pertaining to each body of water, including water body size, fish species most likely to exist, and boat restrictions. Access is limited to foot traffic, except on roads designated by the landowner. In addition to F.I.S.H. properties, the atlas' full-page county maps show state, federal, and many community fishing lakes.

*After making some phone calls, I manage to solicit a couple of buddies who were looking for an excuse to take a day off. Bright and early the next day, we are on our way, loaded down with fishing tackle and belly boats. The weather forecast is perfect, with highs only in the upper 80s and light winds.*

*We located the first site easily. We simply found a reference point on the county map and counted section lines. The site was clearly marked with F.I.S.H. signs and regulations. A small parking area was available and a fence stile had been installed to get us past the five strands of barbed wire.*

*A few minutes later, we are at water's edge, donning waders and swim fins. My buddies, having prepared themselves better the night before, grabbed their tackle and began flogging the water with spinnerbaits for bass. As for me? Well, I had made the decision to fish with a fly rod. Flyfishing is a technique I had wanted to learn for years and was just now beginning. Several practice hours on a paved*



F.I.S.H. areas are marked with signs and open from March-October each year.

*parking lot and a couple of short fishing trips to the local county lake were the extent of my flyfishing experience.*

*By noon, we had covered the pond and voted to move on to the next site. Several bass of all sizes had provided some exciting catch*

*and release activity for my friends. I managed to luck into a couple of smaller fish. Somehow, practicing in a paved parking lot and casting while navigating in a belly boat seemed altogether different.*

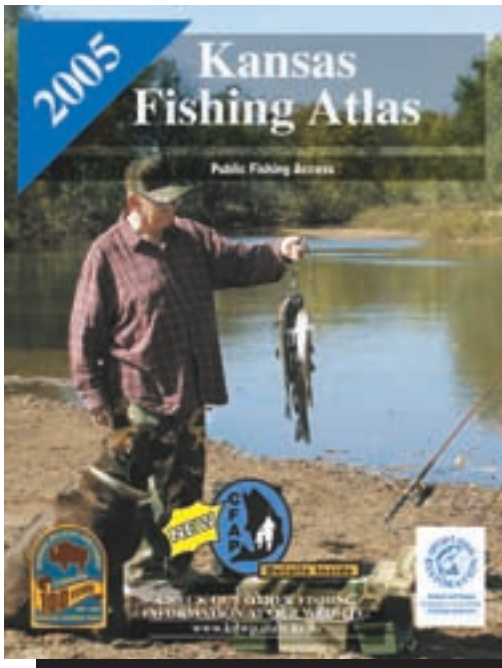
*After a sack lunch, we drove to the next site which was just 5 miles north and 2 miles east of our first location. Our fishing atlas listed this pond as 22 acres, nearly double the size of the first pond. Once again, after a short walk, we were ready and eager to see what this aesthetically pleasing farm pond had to offer. My ailing partners, both of whom had called in sick, leaped into their belly boats and headed for the pond's dam.*

*In 2005, there are 1,215 surface acres of ponds, 83 miles of streams and 2 stream access sites, located in 41 counties enrolled in the F.I.S.H. program.*

*I was still in the process of analyzing the situation. Let's see —early June, water warming in the shallows, an extensive weed bed on the far side*



Some sites will require anglers to park in designated areas and walk in, while others may allow anglers to drive on designated roads. Anglers must respect landowners' wishes, pick up any trash, and follow F.I.S.H. rules to ensure properties remain in the program.



With a *Kansas Fishing Atlas* in hand, anglers can travel and usually find a F.I.S.H. area with the type of fishing opportunities they desire. Many of the enrolled ponds provide excellent bass and panfish angling. Many of the streams provide good catfish angling.



— bluegill could be spawning! I searched through my small assortment of flies and singled out a yellow-bellied nymph that a friend had tied for me. While attaching it to the tippet (a term I had recently learned) I remembered my friend's words when he gave me the fly. "This yellow-bellied nymph is my favorite fly. Really big bluegills find it irresistible."

As I paddled across the pond, a slight breeze blowing toward me made me work harder than I had bargained for. As I paused to catch my breath and work out a cramp, I mumbled to myself "I've got to get out of the office more." Upon reaching the other side, I found the coontail weed bed extending 20 to 30 feet from the

bank in 2 to 3 feet of water. This looked like an ideal place to find bluegill. On my first cast, a small bass picked up the nymph instantly. It leaped out of the water a couple of times before I was able to get it close enough to the belly boat and release it. Wow! There is something about catching a fish on a fly rod that I just can't explain.

I eased along the edge of the weed bed, catching and releasing several more small bass, occasionally glancing toward the dam. My buddies had to be catching fish because they hadn't moved from their original location. I paddled on, paying close attention to the contour of the adjacent land when I came across a shallow point jutting 50 feet out from

the shoreline. Coontail covered the point, but there were a number of pockets that appeared to be void of any vegetation. I landed the nymph near the closest open spot, and let it pause. Boom! I had one! The fish cut through the water, zigzagging back and forth several times. This has to be a bluegill, I thought to myself. And sure enough, it was. I got the saucer-sized 'gill close and slid it into the palm of my hand. Ouch! I don't know how many bluegill I've handled through the years, but that dorsal fin always manages to draw blood. After freeing the yellow-bellied nymph, I admired my adversary. It's a big bull, probably measuring 10 inches. It lies calmly in the palm of my hand, seemingly satisfied with the pain inflicted

*and proud of its vibrant breeding colors. I lower it to the water and it swam off without hesitation.*

*I caught spawning bluegill for the next hour or so, pausing only to monitor the location of my cohorts. I wondered if I should let them know about my honey hole. Naw! Friends are friends, but there are some things that an angler needs to keep to himself.*

F.I.S.H. is just one of many fisheries programs that the Fisheries and Wildlife Division administers to benefit anglers. F.I.S.H. provides anglers with a place to fish while leaving the

land in private ownership. By providing a place to fish, the tradition of fishing can be preserved. Wildlife and Parks officials periodically patrol F.I.S.H. areas. Violators will be ticketed or arrested for vandalism, littering or failing to comply with fishing regulations.

The Fishing Atlas is available, free of charge, around March 1 of each year at all Wildlife and Parks Offices and many local vendors that sell hunting and fishing licenses. Inside the front cover of the atlas is a list of rules and regulations that pertain to F.I.S.H. sites. Please remember

that common sense and ethical behavior will influence the future of this program.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the F.I.S.H. Program, contact your local Wildlife and Parks Office or district fisheries biologist. The waters will need to be available for public access from March 1 to October 31.

This program is made possible by the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act — federal aid project funded by your purchase of fishing equipment. ♡

Be sure to consult the F.I.S.H. area rules in the Kansas Fishing Atlas so you know what the creel and length limits are for enrolled waters. Ponds have a 2 fish per day creel limit on channel catfish, and ponds in some areas have an 18-inch minimum length limit on black bass. On all F.I.S.H. ponds, the creel limit on black bass is two per day.





# *Country Stampede*



## **At Tuttle Creek State Park**

text and photos by Marc A. Murrell  
*manager, Great Plains Nature Center, Wichita*

*All Kansas state park managers organize special events to draw patrons to the parks and ensure that visitors enjoy their stay. However, one event overshadows all others: the Country Stampede at Tuttle Creek State Park, near Manhattan.*

*Last June, nearly 140,000 music fans enjoyed several days of performances by the top acts in country music.*



For 51 weeks out of the year, the 1,156-acre Tuttle Creek State Park is a quiet, aesthetically-pleasing day-use and camping retreat surrounding its namesake reservoir just north of Manhattan. But for one week at the end of June, it transforms into the largest outdoor event of its kind in the form of the annual Affiliated Foods Midwest Country Stampede. The 2005 event will be held June 23-26 and marks the 10th year of the event at Tuttle Creek State Park.

"They looked at Manhattan, the park and the proximity to Topeka and other things," said Todd Lovin, Tuttle Creek State Park manager of the event organizer's choice of venues. "The event has really grown over the years, from about 30,000 people the first year to nearly 140,000 last year."

A month's worth of entertainment, which includes country music's biggest stars coupled with a retro rock band or two, is packed into four days at the River Pond Area below the dam. Entertainers scheduled to appear this year include Phil Vassar, Shevy Smith, Cross Canadian Ragweed, Montgomery Gentry, Keith Urban, SHeDAISY, Sawyer Brown, Big and Rich, Chely Wright, Lonestar, ZZ Top and others. Single day or entire event tickets can be purchased and are cheaper if ordered in advance. Other options for VIP seating are also available.

Organizers rent the entire area from KDWP for exclusive use during the event and handle all the publicity.

"The event really promotes the park," Lovin said. "You hear about the Country Stampede at

Tuttle Creek State Park, and that's a tremendous thing we can't put a price tag on."

The event is obviously a benefit to the Manhattan area economy. Much like K-State home football games, local motels are filled to capacity for the event.

"I've heard it means about \$7 million to the local community," Lovin said.

It's a win-win situation for the KDWP, and Country Stampede personnel have even assisted the agency with a grant to help update the water system and purchase rental cabins for the park.

"Things like that have been beneficial for us," Lovin added of the improvements.

But the event doesn't happen without a lot of hard work. Lovin and his staff have a tremendous amount of maintenance to perform before the

event.

"We have to prepare our sewer lagoons so we have enough space and alter some of our buildings to accommodate that many people," Lovin said. "We have lots of mowing to get done ahead of time to be ready for them to move in. We also go through each one of our campsites the month prior and pull the electrical hook-ups apart and make sure they're working right."

In addition to the preparation, state park staff handle any problems that arise during the event.

"We're the technical experts of how this park runs," Lovin admits. "If there's a water leak or an electrical problem we're the ones that know where to go to find it and fix it because we know how the systems work here."

The Country Stampede organizers provides their own law



Most of the year, Tuttle Creek State Park is a typical Kansas park. It features 116 utility campsites and 500 primitive campsites. But for four days in June, the park turns into an outdoor venue for top country music and more than 100,000 fans.



Accommodating such a large crowd in a state park requires planning and hard work. Tuttle Creek State Park manager Todd Lovin and his staff must prepare sewer lagoons, mow and make sure all electrical campsites are working properly. It's a big job.

enforcement and security by partnering with local law enforcement agencies. KDWP also provides some law enforcement throughout the event.

With that many people and a huge party-like atmosphere, there are many challenges. However, Lovin said the biggest factor each year is the weather.

"Late June is traditionally a rainy period, and that's always something we have to deal with," Lovin said.

Parking is the biggest problem during wet weather since attendees park on the grass. A typical mid-summer thunderstorm that dumps an inch of rain can quickly turn the area into a quagmire. But event organizers have that covered, too. They rent busses to shuttle people into and out of the park.

After 10 years of experience, the event seems to go pretty smoothly, and Lovin puts it all in per-

spective.

"For as much hassle as it can be, it's great to see all those people coming to the park and all the people that just love that event. There's a certain satisfaction to that," Lovin said. "Positive comments I get from the general public far outweigh the negative ones."

That many people in one place obviously has an impact on the park and its facilities.



No matter how well prepared the staff is, wet weather throws a curve that makes everything more complicated.

However, the park is back to normal soon after the concert event is over.

"The Country Stampede organizers are very good about that and by the following Friday all the trash is picked up and life is pretty much back to normal," Lovin said as far as clean-up and tear-down of the event. "The challenging part of it is that next weekend is usually 4th of July weekend and there will obviously be some scars, especially if on the grassy areas if it rains, but that's all worked on as well."

While the Country Stampede is a main event for Tuttle Creek State Park, there's more to the park than this one annual event and things are constantly being improved and added. The River Pond Area has 104 campsites with electric and water with plans to add about 50 more in the future.





The venue provides unprecedented fan access to the performers. Here, the country group Cowboy Crush signs autographs and poses for photos with adoring fans.

Fancy Creek Area has 24 electric-only sites and the Randolph Area has 20 campsites with electric and water.

“Overall, we’ve got about 500 primitive camp sites,” Lovin added. “We’ve just added four new cabins available for rent that have bedrooms and lofts, full bathrooms, furnished kitchens with microwaves, coffee pots and cooking utensils,” Lovin said. “They range in price depending on in-season or off-season rates from \$55-\$85.”

The River Pond Area has seven canoes and two kayaks available for rent, and Lovin said the demand is definitely there as they’re booked on a regular basis. Rental prices for each canoe are \$5 per hour or \$20 per day. If you reserve five or more canoes, it’s discounted to \$4 per hour or \$15 per day.

Shooting enthusiasts will enjoy the Fancy Creek Shooting Range located on the upper end of Tuttle Creek Reservoir.

“We’ve been hosting a lot of events at the range such as a women’s recreational shooting day,” Lovin said. “There is a user fee to use the range, which stays with the Friends of Fancy Creek Range group for operation and maintenance of the facility.”

The daily range fee is \$10 and a yearly membership is \$75. It’s open the first and third full weekend of each month and the 4th Thursday.

Lovin and his staff, as well as local volunteers, have held special hunts for turkeys and deer for youth and disabled individuals in and around the park for the last few years.

“These have been extremely popular for us,” Lovin said of

the additional opportunities. “We’ve even had ADA trout fishing days a couple times here, too.”

Tuttle Creek State Park also has a mountain bike trail that is currently being expanded.

“The local Manhattan Mountain Bike Patrol group is expanding our Fancy Creek trail from 4 miles to 8 miles,” Lovin said. “They’re hosting an event up there this year, and it’s quickly becoming one of the premier mountain bike trails in Kansas. It’s definitely challenging.”

Horse enthusiasts will find an accommodating campground complete with 20 utility sites in the Randolph Area. The North Randolph Horse Trail is 13 miles long.

And the rise in popularity for Kansas State University football over the last decade has been a big boost for Tuttle Creek State Park.

“We fill our camp sites for almost every home game,” Lovin said. “We like Coach Snyder a lot here.”

So whether you’re into K-State football, country music, or simply enjoy spending a beautiful day or weekend outside, Tuttle Creek State Park is the perfect retreat.

“We’ve have a lot to offer and something for everybody. And there’s a lot more good stuff coming in the next few years,” Lovin concluded.

For more information on Tuttle Creek State Park, contact (785) 539-7941, email [TuttleCreekSP@wp.state.ks.us](mailto:TuttleCreekSP@wp.state.ks.us), or check it out on the KDWP web site at:

[www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us) 



# Hunter Education History

by Wayne Doyle  
statewide hunter education coordinator, Pratt

photos by Mike Blair

*Since 1973, the Hunter Education Program has certified more than 400,000 new hunters. Driven by the passion and dedication of 1,500 dedicated volunteer instructors, the program emphasizes safety, ethics, landowner respect, and wildlife management principles.*

The genesis of the Kansas Hunter Education program can be found in the movement for hunter safety training occurring after World War II. There was a tremendous increase in the number of hunting accidents as more and more people entered into the tradition of hunting. Concerned states and sportsman's groups looked for ways to reduce this accident rate. The most

popular solution was a training course for new hunters.

In 1949, New York and Kentucky became the first states to offer a Hunter Safety Course for new hunters. New York designed a program utilizing volunteer instructors. This became the model for other states as additional programs were developed.





Hunter Safety, as it was then called, entered Kansas in the early 1960s in the form of a National Rifle Association Safe Hunting Course. Detailed records of this decade-long effort were not kept. The best guess is that around 200 volunteer instructors, certified by the National Rifle Association, trained 2,000-3,000 new hunters in basic gun safety. This NRA course laid much of the groundwork

leading to the establishment of the Kansas program.

Demand in the early 1970s for a required course in hunter safety education led the Kansas Fish and Game Commission and numerous sportsmen's organizations to propose such a course to the Legislature. In 1972, a law was passed requiring all hunters born on or after 1 July, 1957 to complete a safety course before hunting. The Fish and Game Commission was to begin classes on July 1, 1973, the day that the law became effective.

In November 1972, game protector Royal Elder was appointed as the first coordinator of the program. He was tasked with designing a curriculum, writing and producing a student manual, recruiting and training a cadre of instructors, and developing the administrative support needed. Initially, the program was

assigned to the Law Enforcement Division. As a result, the game protectors (as they were then known) had a large measure of responsibility for launching the program. The plan was to have 2,000 instructors trained to provide courses to the 20,000 students anticipated the first year.

Then, as now, volunteer instructors were the key ingredient in this effort. There is no way a program of this magnitude can be run by the department alone. By July 1, 1973, 4,000 instructors were trained and ready to teach a four hour course in basic gun safety for hunting situations. Much to everyone's surprise, in the first year there were 36,318 students certified – almost double the projections. It is worth noting that the vast majority of the classes were held from July to November. In the second year, there were 18,500 additional students. Producing nearly 55,000



Today's hunter education course involves at least 10 hours of instruction, most of it in the classroom. KDWP provides a variety of teaching aids including videos, slide shows, and PowerPoint programs. Many classes also include some field and live fire instruction.





Prior to 1973, the department honored a hunter safety course that was sponsored by the National Rifle Association. The course was required of young hunters in 1973, and since that year, the department has certified more than 400,000 students.

certifications in the first two years of a new program was a phenomenal accomplishment.

After the big push to train the 16-and-under population, the course settled into a routine that trained 12,000-16,000 students a year through the rest of the 1970s. The average student was 12 to 14 years old. The course increased in length from the original 4 hours to 6 and then 8 hours. While still a gun safety course in many respects, subjects such as conservation, wildlife management, game laws, first aid, survival and ethics were introduced. The best measure of the immediate success of the program was that the average number of fatal accidents in the decade dropped from 5 per year to 2.7 per year.

As the decade of the 80s began, the program was moved from Law Enforcement to Information and Education where it remains. A mandatory Furharvester Education course was added for anyone born on or after July 1, 1966. Increased emphasis on

instructor training was instituted. A mandatory re-certification requirement for instructors was added late in the decade. The instructor population settled in to around 2,000 active instructors. An average of 14,000 students per year were certified. A new student manual was produced. Additional instructor materials and equipment were made available. The course length was increased again to 10 hours

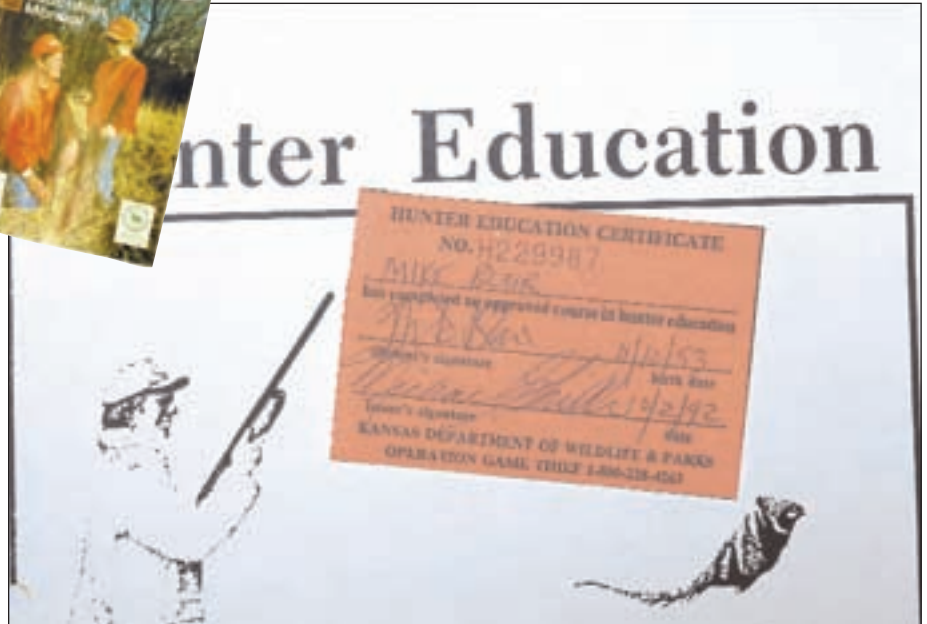
minimum. Many classes began offering live fire gun training. Kansas instructors were proactive in the development of hunter education trails which offer students simulated hunting situations where they make real-world decisions such as shoot/don't shoot, ethical dilemmas, landowner relations, and more. The name of the program was changed from Hunter Safety to Hunter Education to better reflect the reality that new hunters were being trained in skills beyond safety. The Hunter Education Advisory Committee (HEAC) was established. Made up of experienced instructors from all parts of the state, the HEAC helps set the direction for the program. Three Kansas coordinators left their indelible marks on the program; George Schlecty, Rob Manes, and Steve Leggins. At the end of the decade, a total of 263,237 new hunters had been given their start along the Hunter's Path. The average number of fatal accidents

dropped another full point to 1.7 per year.

The 1990s saw some significant changes and improvements in the program. Hunter ethics and responsibilities began receiving increased emphasis by the instructors. Additional budget monies allowed purchase of improved equipment, more firearms and ammunition for training, an updated student manual, and increased use of high tech "gadgets" such as computers. In 1997, a course in Bowhunter Education was established for 12- and 13-year-old big game bowhunters. A set of national standards and student objectives were adopted and incorporated into the Kansas Hunter Education program. Increased cooperation with the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) enhanced Kansas' efforts in areas such as alternative forms of delivery, instructor tools, and communication among the state coordinators and the 75,000 volunteer instructors in the United States and Canada. The 25th anniversary of Kansas Hunter Education was celebrated in 1998. Coordinators Steve Stackhouse and Ross Robins added their footprints to the Hunter Ed trail. By the end of the 1990s, a total of 387,907 Kansans had been trained since 1973. The average number of fatal accidents continued to drop and now averaged 0.75 per year.

As the program entered the new century, technology presented new and exciting teaching opportunities. The Laser Shot Hunting





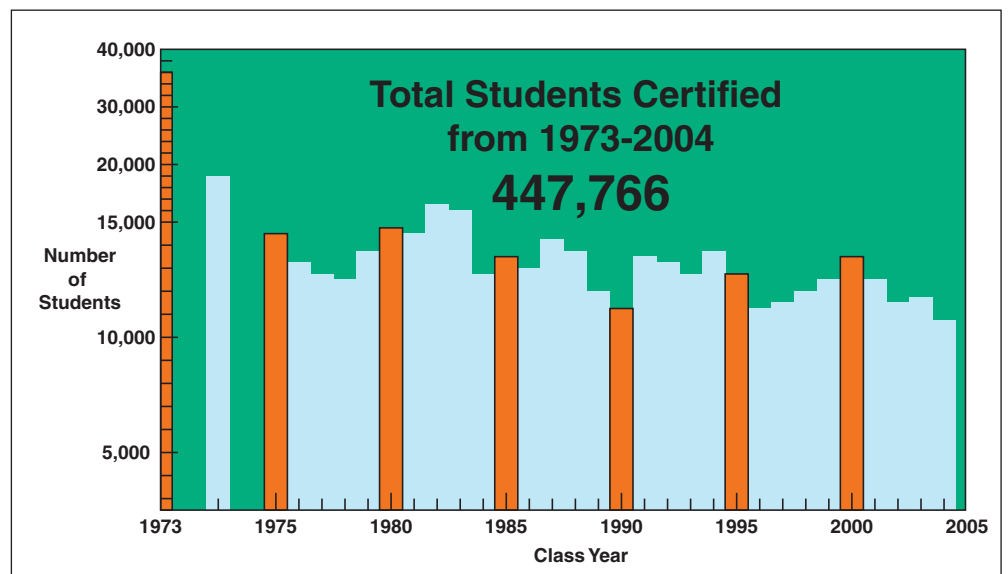
Simulation System entered Hunter Ed in a big way. An invaluable training aid for instructors and a superb learning tool for students, these systems have been incorporated into about 1/3 of all courses. Audio visual sets (lap top computer, projectors, VCR/DVD players) are scattered around the state and available for instructor use. Increased numbers of shotguns and ammunition are available for classes where live fire opportunities are possible. About half of all classes provide some type of live fire experience. Small utility trailers, packed with hunter safety trail materials, battery operated clay target traps, and related items have been made available and have seen considerable use. On their own, volunteer instructors worked with the software industry to modify a hunting game to be used in classes as another training aid. This software has evolved into HETools©, an instructor friendly program that is an effective method of presenting the subject matter, in a format that students are used to seeing in school. This decade is seeing the development of Advanced Hunter Education Courses, wingshooting clinics, and other enhanced training opportunities, all for the education of

The course and materials are free to students. The manual has been customized to fit a Kansas-related curriculum and updated so that information is current.

hunters. The Hunter Education program and the department's Pass It On program are working together to increase the participation of Kansans on the Hunter's Path. So far, this decade has seen a record low number of incidents for four consecutive years. Through 2004, 447,258 individuals have been certified.

HETools© is but one example in a long list of contributions made to the program by the vol-

unteer instructors. Without these dedicated men and women, there would not be a Hunter Education Program. Beginning with the initial group of instructors and continuing through today, the program has been blessed with people whose dedication to the sport of hunting is unsurpassed. They come from all walks of life – farmers, doctors, school teachers, truck drivers, laborers, military, lawyers, law enforcement, secre-



taries, CEOs. Their educational level ranges from less than high school to PhD. All instructors are or have been active hunters. Sixteen percent of the current instructors have been teaching for more than 20 years. Ninety-three of the original 4000 instructors are still active after 32 years. All methods of hunting are represented – bowhunting, black powder, trapping and modern firearms. Hunter Ed instructors bring experience and a deep love of wildlife to the class. They become instructors for many different personal reasons, but most would say that they teach Hunter Ed to give back something to the sport they love. They all share a common goal: to make the sport of hunting safer while instilling an ethical code of hunting behavior into the new hunters they train. They are the first guides on the path of the hunter.

The importance of volunteer efforts has long been recognized. Many instructors have been awarded the Order of the Buffalo.

In many respects, this is the most prestigious award of all, as the instructor has been nominated by fellow instructors. When you see an instructor wearing a small, pewter pin of a standing buffalo, you can be sure that individual is recognized by peers as a cut above the average.

One of the significant highlights of my own tenure as coordinator is a department program to recognize and reward instructors, nominated by their peers and selected by the Advisory Committee, as Instructors of the Year. One person is chosen as the Kansas Instructor of the Year, and one instructor from each region is recognized as Regional Instructor of the Year. Each state recipient is awarded a Ruger Redlabel shotgun, and each regional winner receives a Ruger Deluxe 10/22.

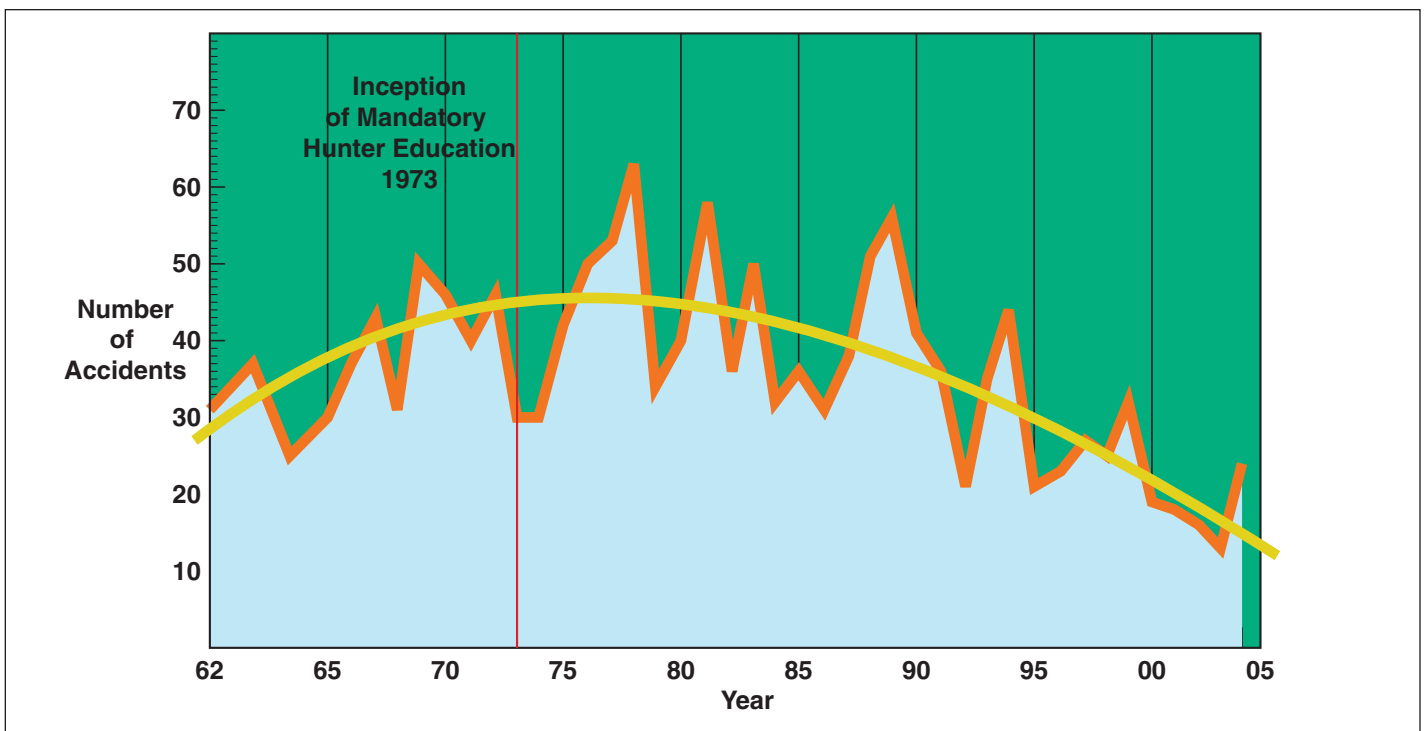
It was with a great deal of pride that I participated in the international level recognition of two of Kansas' finest. In 2003, Ed Augustine, Junction City, was inducted into the International



Hunter Education Association Hall of Fame. And in 2004, Larry McAdow, Halstead, was named as the 2003 Winchester Instructor of the Year by the IHEA. An entire issue of this magazine could be devoted to what these two men have done for Hunter Education. Suffice it to say that Hunter Education in Kansas and beyond is better because Augustine and McAdow choose to participate.

All our volunteer instructors have made a good program better. Hunting is safe and getting safer because of them. ♡

*The author wishes to thank the following for contributions to this article: Royal Elder, Rob Manes, Ross Robins, and Ed Augustine.*







# Remembering the Civilian Conservation Corps



by Dave Goble

*Crawford State Park manager, Girard*

It was a desperate nation that President Franklin D. Roosevelt took over in 1932. People needed work and a program he created not only put millions to work, but it is responsible for some of Kansas' most popular outdoor recreation areas.



In this year of the centennial anniversary of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, it's important to remember the thousands of men who helped developed many of the premiere recreational sites in our state. These men were part

of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). To tell their story, we must first remember the times.

The nation bordered on desperation after the great stock market crash of 1929. The lack of soil conservation practices cou-

pled with drought had turned many western states, including Kansas, into a "Dust Bowl," and the Great Depression hit home. In 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president on the promises to end rampant unemployment and halt the economic chaos that gripped the country.

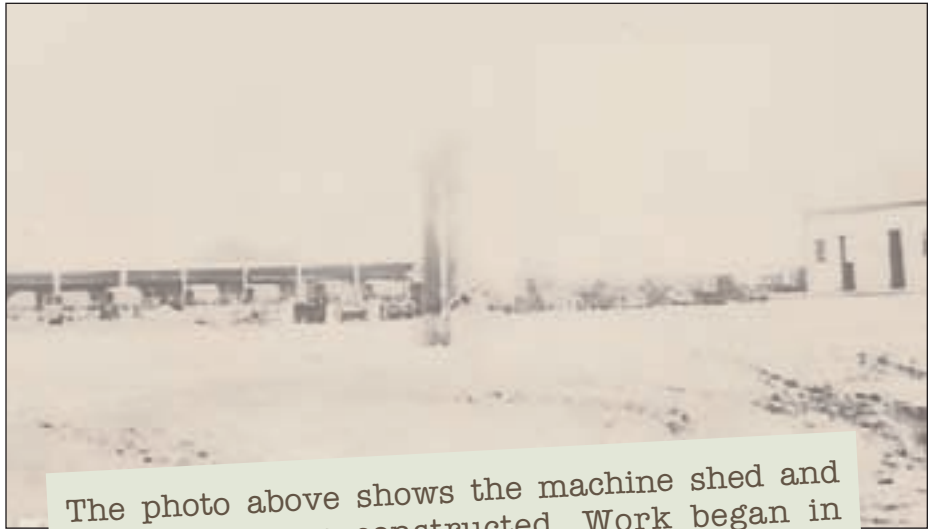
On March 9, 1933, he called the 73rd Congress into emergency session to hear and authorize the programs of his "New Deal." His most popular program, in which more than 3 million men participated, was the CCC. This group was to be a peacetime army, recruited from the ranks of the urban unemployed, and sent to battle the destruction of our natural resources.

It was a great idea, and it enjoyed tremendous public support. Requirements for joining the CCC were simple. Enrollees had to be young, single, healthy, and unemployed. The Corps was organized under the military, which utilized its own officers to initially command and organize the camps and companies. The departments of Interior and Agriculture were then responsible for organizing work at the state level.

In Kansas, the Soil Conservation Service, under the Department of Agriculture, took the lead and coordinated 35 of the state's 53 camp projects. The Kansas Forestry Fish and Game Commission was also a major state partner and contributed site locations for projects, as well as engineering, design work, and onsite inspection. Crawford State Park, then known as Crawford County State Park #2, was one of those projects.

The 788th Company (SCS-10-L) of the CCC was originally formed at Camp Whiteside, Fort Riley, on May 19, 1933. The 788th was made up of Kansas boys, most coming from the eastern part of the state. After conditioning, the company was transferred to Camp Rutledge near Park Rapids, Minn. During this time, the company participated in many firefighting calls and received the nickname "Fire Devils." They returned to Kansas, arriving at Farlington, in Crawford County, on June 6, 1935. The project at Farlington was the construction of an earthen fill dam approximately 1,350 feet long and 65 feet high, requiring fill of 284,000 cubic yards of material. The project also included the construction of an emergency spillway, access road to the area, and the clearing of lake site timber.

The goal of the CCC was to employ as many men as possible, so as much of the work that could be accomplished by hand was done that way. The



The photo above shows the machine shed and shop that were constructed. Work began in 1935 and the project was complete in 1939.

Lake Crawford project was started by digging the puddle cores. A row of men with shovels and picks began digging into the rock bluffs at either end of the dam. Clay to fill the puddle cores was dug from the future lakebed with mule drawn slip buckets and loaded into wagons pulled by teams of mules.

Owen "Cobb" O'Hare, who started as a muleskinner, stated in a 1999 interview, "I started

with a real pretty new team of mules one day. The team had to haul a wagon to move the dirt out of the pit. I thought I knew how to handle them. I did – I worked on a farm. But when the first load of dirt hit that wagon, boy, those mules went wild. It was a-frighting them. I bailed out. When I saw them heading for the puddle trench, I knew my days of muleskinning were over."

Paul Pavey, another CCC member, recalled, "When I came here, the core was just getting started dug pretty well. I was probably one of the youngest in the camp. Men were not allowed to join until the age of 17 and had to leave by the age of 25. I fibbed about my age and left more like a man than when I came in. You worked, and you worked hard."

By May 1936, construction was well under way.

**Project News**

*(Reprinted from the Fire Devil May 28, 1936)*

*Progress on the project has been excellent. With exception of the rainy period week before last, the movement of earth to the fill on the*



To employ as many men as possible, as much of the work that could be done by hand was done that way. Workers earned \$30 per month — \$5 to be kept for spending and \$25 that was to be sent home to their family.



dam has been continuous. During the rainy spell, no time was lost as the men worked on tasks reserved for wet weather.

An additional 12-foot section of the concrete valve tower has been added. Work on the dam has consisted in placing earth in the central section of the dam in order to fill in the area surrounding the valve well. As this fill increased in height, an addition to the tower became necessary. The fill is now level, and it will be carried level as the dam increases in height.

Large rocks for the top of the upstream riprap have been placed, and rock dumped on the slope for the riprap. This also will be carried along as the slope rises.

The puddling of the main trench is completed, except a short distance on east and west ends. The auxiliary trenches have also been puddled except for a small portion of the trench. Selected red clay was used in puddling these trenches.

The double shift is being used on the dirt-moving equipment, creating a steady flow of earth which is causing the dam to take form, and make it noticeable to the eye. Visitors comment on the apparent



Double shifts of workers moved dirt to build the earthen dam, which ended up approximately 1,350 feet long and 65 feet high and required fill of 284,000 cubic yards.

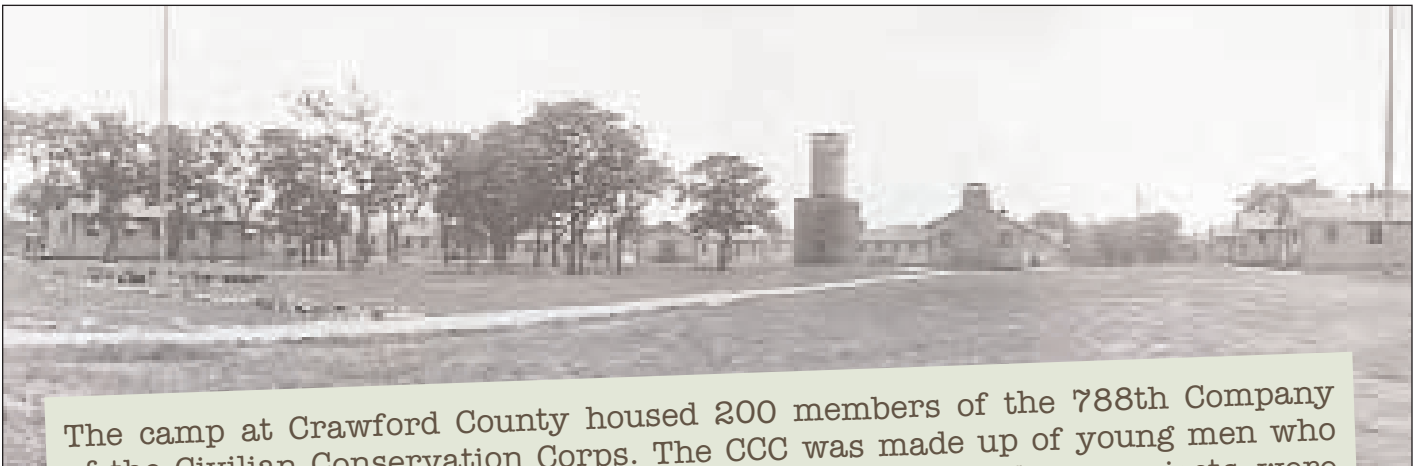
rapid progress.

The shed for housing the trucks and equipment is completed, and all the equipment can be stored during bad weather. Every Friday evening, all machinery is placed in the shed, where it remains until Monday morning. New equipment has been received for the project. An Allis Chalmers 75 HP tractor was transferred from Toronto, 4 new Allis Chalmers 75s were received from the factory, a Caterpillar 50 HP was received from the factory, and a half-yard Trackson shovel was received

from the factory. This shovel is being used to load the puddling clay in the trucks.

Work on the spillway has not been started, as we are awaiting the arrival of a larger gas shovel. Mr. Laird, Associate Technician SCS, inspected the project for several days. Mr. Neville, Engineer from the State Fish and Game Department, also inspected the project.

Both seemed well satisfied with progress of the work. It is indeed a pleasing sight to stand on the brow of the hill and watch the activity on



The camp at Crawford County housed 200 members of the 788th Company of the Civilian Conservation Corps. The CCC was made up of young men who were “young, single, healthy and unemployed.” Fifty-three projects were completed in Kansas by the CCC.

the project as the trucks and teams move in and out from the borrow pits, the big tractors pull the elevating grader, the blades, and the packer.

One is impressed with the orderliness and smooth functioning of all the parts of the huge whole, and the manner in which the supervising personnel handle the large project. The morale of the men is fine, and the spirit of cooperation between the army and the soil conservation service is excellent. The spirit with which the men enter into the work is commendable, everyone being willing to do his part. In March, we placed second in the district in the number of men turned over to the project superintendent by the commanding officer, and in April, we placed first for the camps in Kansas.

For the past several months, no accidents have occurred, for the men have been observing the rules and instructions of the safety council. The supervising personnel wish to compliment the men on the spirit at which they go about their work, and the manner in which they conduct themselves while on the project.

Not all in camp was work. Another advantage the CCC offered its enrollees was the chance to further their education. In their spare time, they could enroll in classes such as radio operator and maintenance, surveying, photography, leather works, algebra, typing, shorthand, electricity, soil conservation, leader training, and music.

On the lighter side, boys will be boys. The Farlington Camp was full of life, as illustrated in this excerpt of the camp newspaper:

### *The Camp Gossip Says*

*(Excerpts from Thursday May 23, 1937 "Fire Devil")*

*Because an assistant to the [female] assistant baker is reported to have "got religion" in the process, we think more camp boys should find more girl friends. The other side of this religious matter is the fact that there can be too many girls in church for a fellow to feel comfortable.*

*There is a new boy who offered payment in advance for services and advice received at the camp hospital. According to the camp bookmaker, a 20-acre corn patch should yield 20 gallons.*

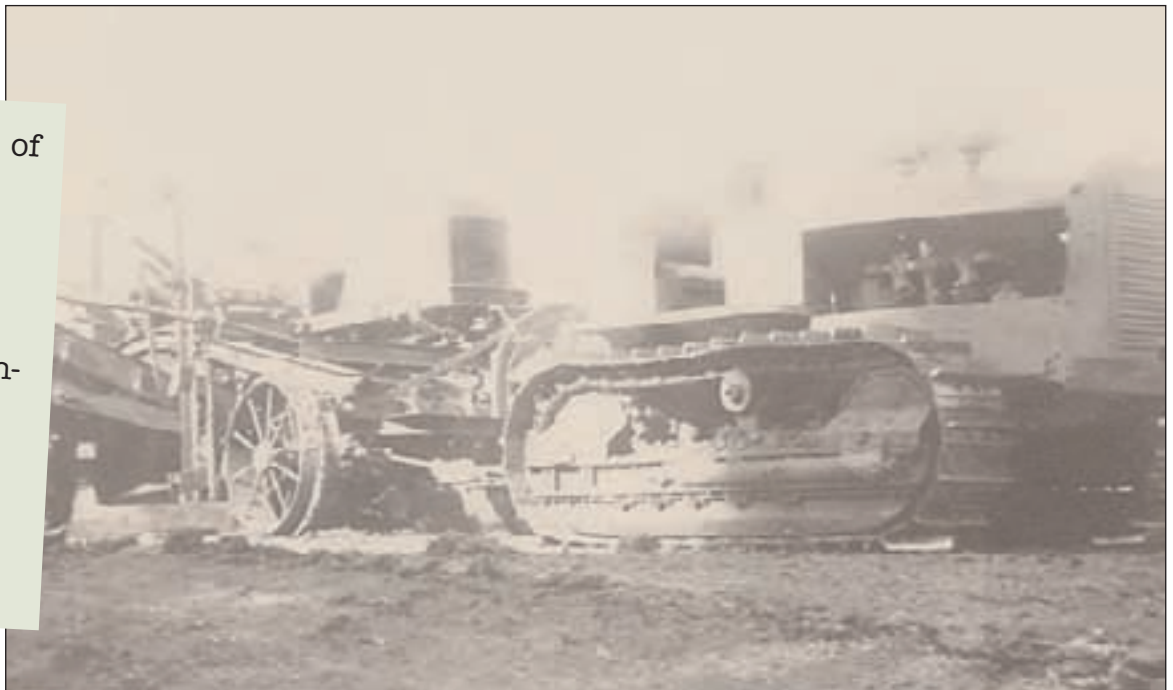
*One of the "lighter" arguments on the works had to do with whether light is substance or matter. We refer the matter to Penden, who tried for a record absorption of vitamin D, and practically broiled his back in the process.*

*A certain boy in No. 6 seems to have trouble in making his dates. As it happened, one night he made a date with two girls, and it turned out that he named the same evening to both. We do not know what the outcome will be, but we are with you boy.*

*A boy called "Dutch" claims that Springfield Mo. is the prettiest town in eastern Kansas. We always said it will get you sooner or later.*

*After a lengthy argument resulting from a bet on the weather, it was finally agreed that five drops on a brick would constitute a rain.*

While most of the heavy equipment came from the factory, the local economy benefitted enormously by supply the camp with services and supplies.





It took four years for the crew to complete the clay core dam, which created the 150-acre Crawford State Fishing Lake. Crawford State Park was constructed along the lake's shoreline and offers 74 water/electric utility sites and 425 primitive sites.

The camp social life was not bad either. The boys were treated with trips into town for dances and movies. Many of the young men came to southeast Kansas to work and stayed for life. C.W. Scammel, of Girard, spent two years at the camp and never left the area. "I went up the hill a mile and south and married this little gal, and I couldn't get out of it then," he recounted in 1999.

The CCC camp was also an economic benefit to the local community. Not only was money coming into town from CCC member's salaries, but it also came into the community from the services and supplies needed to keep the camp running. Of the CCC member's \$30 monthly salary, \$5 was to be kept for spending money and \$25 was to

be sent home to his family.

The camp helped build the town of Girard, according to local historian John Spurling. Spurling said, "The men at the camp needed places to buy food, entertainment, repair shoes, and more. Their needs made it possible for a little fruit stand owner to become a grocer; the elevator in Farlington had its boom days selling grain and hay for the mules. Many families earned extra money selling services like washing to the men."

The Farlington project was completed in 1939. It was then managed by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission as a state lake. In 1965, the facility was turned over to the Kansas Park and Resource Authority, which developed the present day facilities of Crawford State Park. This obviously was not the

only CCC project that would become a Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks facility, but is a typical example of the role the Corps played in the early development of recreational facilities in Kansas.

In 1999, a reunion was held for those who participated in the construction of Crawford State Park. Inspired by this event, the park will host one of the Department of Wildlife and Parks' Centennial Anniversary Events on June 4, 2005. To honor the men of the Civilian Conservation Corps who participated in all of the projects throughout Kansas, a six foot bronze statue commissioned by the Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni Foundation will be dedicated at the Farlington Camp site. This memorial will be surrounded by a self-guided interpretive trail that wanders through the campsite. The trail features several exhibits and artifacts from the camp telling the story of the CCC and the men who served. This statue is provided through donations and sales of commemorative pavers that will form a walkway along the base of the statue.

As we pass through this 2005 year of centennial celebrations, we must call to mind all who came before us with the vision to develop the many outstanding and diverse recreational opportunities available in Kansas. While doing so, we must take time to remember the CCC. ♡

*\*\*Note – To purchase a paver or if you know a CCC Alumnus who would like to attend the dedication event, please contact the Crawford State Park office at (620) 362-3671.*





# Kansas Wild Turkey



## Success Story

**E**arly accounts of Kansas prior to the turn of the century mention wild turkeys in the eastern portion of the state and, according to an article in the July 4, 1872 edition of the Hutchinson News, Barber County offered great hunting grounds, with “deer and wild turkey in great abundance.” By 1900, however, turkeys had succumbed to unregulated subsistence hunting and dramatic changes in their habitats.

The wild turkey's plight in Kansas was a mirror of that across the nation. When Europeans first arrived on North American soil, the wild turkey was abundant and provided an easy food source. The birds were so common that in Eastern markets, dressed wild turkeys sold for only 1 1/2 cents per pound in 1730. By the early 1800s, however, they were becoming scarce in the Eastern forests. Turkeys were susceptible to overhunting, since they could be shot from the roost at night, or even captured in walk-in traps. By 1952, the turkey had been nearly wiped out of its original range across the U.S.

In 1958, Rio Grande turkeys crossed over from Oklahoma and took up residence along the Arkansas River near Arkansas City. This small population of turkeys convinced the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission that turkeys could survive elsewhere in the state. The first trap and transplant efforts actually came from this first flock of Oklahoma immigrants. Records are unclear where these first releases were made, however, and it would be several years before a serious restoration program was started.

Although the turkey restoration program began in 1962, it was not until 1966 that the agency obtained wild turkeys for release in the identified areas. One hundred and twenty-five turkeys were trapped on the King Ranch in Texas and delivered to Pratt. Ten release sites were identified in Elk, Pottawatomie, Ellis, Graham, Sumner, and Harper counties, as well as the Cimarron National Grasslands in Morton County.

Summer brood surveys by landowners and agency personnel during that first nesting season recorded 28 broods with more than 125 young turkeys produced by the Texas transplants. With this early success, the state was anxious to continue introductions. In 1967, channel catfish fry were traded to Oklahoma for 85 additional wild turkeys.

By 1968, after only three nesting seasons, Kansas' turkey populations at several of the initial release sites had increased enough to warrant in-state trap and transplant operations. From then on, birds in established flocks were captured each winter and moved to new locations. Today we have viable turkey populations in all counties and, in all but the southwestern part of the state, turkey numbers continue to grow.

It was eventually discovered that Rio Grandes did poorly in eastern portions of the state where annual rainfall is more than 30 inches. In 1974, greater prairie chickens were traded for 30 eastern turkeys trapped in Missouri. In subsequent years, Kansas traded native forb (weeds beneficial to wildlife) seeds to Missouri for turkeys, and later more prairie chickens were traded to Iowa for eastern turkeys. These wild-trapped easterns were released in timbered regions of eastern Kansas.

When local populations grew sufficiently, they were trapped and transplanted. Today populations of eastern wild turkeys are thriving in much of the eastern one-fourth of Kansas.

By 1973, Rio Grandes were doing so well in southcentral and south-

west Kansas, biologists were considering a spring hunting season. The goal was a statewide population of 1,500 birds before hunting was allowed. Surveys showed 1,400 in 1972.

April 20-28, 1974 was Kansas' first regulated hunting season for wild turkeys. Four hundred permits were allotted for an area of south-central and southwest Kansas, and biologists predicted that Morton and Barber counties would offer top hunting prospects. Only 308 hunters hunted, and they killed 123 turkeys.

Turkeys and turkey hunting have come a long way since that first hunting season. Today, the entire state is open to spring turkey hunting. In all but the southwest quarter, permits are unlimited, and in much of the eastern half of the

state, hunters can purchase a second turkey game tag. In 2004, nearly 65,000 turkey permits and second turkey game tags were sold, and 31,023 turkeys were harvested.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those first biologists who had the vision and inspiration to develop our turkey reintroduction effort. The wild turkey's comeback is truly one of our greatest wildlife management successes. ♡

*Much of this text was excerpted from an article by Bill Hlavachick, "The Wild Turkey Story," from the May/June 1997 issue of this magazine. Hlavachick was one of those first biologists who were responsible for this success story. He retired from KDWP in 1995 after 30 years of service as a wildlife biologist.*



As turkey populations grew, resident flocks were trapped and transplanted to other areas of the state. Rio Grande turkeys were often captured in drop nets like the one pictured above.





IT'S NEW!

IT'S EXCITING!

IT'S GREAT!

# KANOPOLIS STATE PARK

*It's Kansas' Playground of the Prairies!*

NEW MODERN  
SERVICE  
FACILITIES

• Fishing • Camping • Swimming  
• Boating • Hiking • Skiing

OUTDOOR FUN  
FOR ALL  
THE FAMILY

by Rick Martin

*Kanopolis State Park manager, Lindsborg*

***The Kansas Park and Resources Authority was created by the Kansas Legislature in 1955. In 1959, Kanopolis State Park was opened and dedicated. Today, state parks are administered through the Parks Division of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, but 50 years later, the goal is still the same: improving the quality of our lives by providing outdoor recreation at our state parks.***

**K**ansas Governor Fred Hall and the Kansas Legislature authorized and created the Kansas Park and Resources Authority in 1955 to develop and manage state parks. First completed was Kanopolis State Park, which was dedicated May 30, 1959. The need for such public areas was summarized in statements by then Governor George Docking, who stated: "Kanopolis State Park and others like it are among our greatest natural assets. They bolster the industrial development climate, increase tourist travel, and provide areas of wholesome outdoor recreational opportunity for our own citizens. With

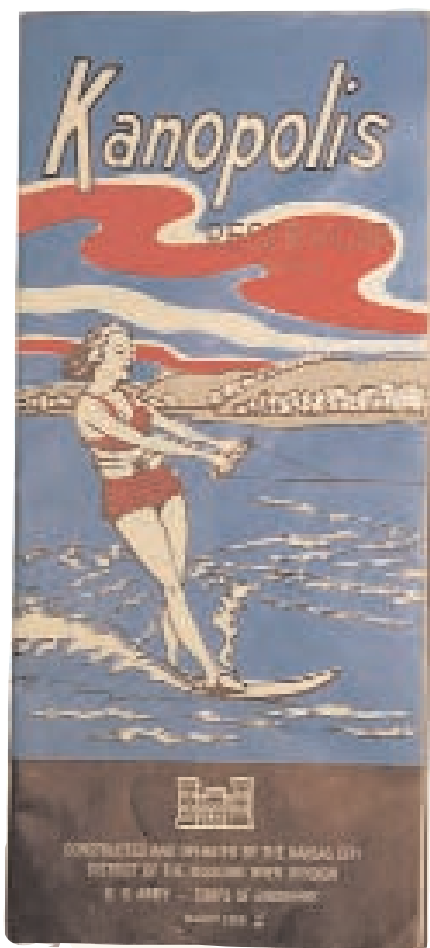
the trend moving toward more leisure time and more cars, the need and desire for family outdoor recreation is increasing. The development of public access areas on federal reservoirs is an economical and available means to fill the recreational desires of our citizens."

Kanopolis visitors were surveyed that summer, and their responses were enthusiastic. On September 22, 1959, Mr. Tib Anderson, Chairman of the Kanopolis State Park Advisory Board, wrote in a letter to the entire Advisory Board, "It was not by accident that Kanopolis was chosen as the location for the first State Park under the

new Park Authority. It offers the most return for the tax-payer's dollar. Its central location in the state, the very terrain lends itself to economical basic improvement necessary where there is heavy traffic of people seeking varied out-of-door recreational facilities. We seem to have forgotten that here is one of our natural resources being developed for our use, unique in that it has appeal to people in all walks of life. It has direct bearing on our industrial development, a natural local asset at no special cost."

From this beginning, other parks were developed across the state. A significant change





occurred in 1987, when Governor Mike Hayden and the Kansas Legislature combined the Kansas Fish & Game Commission with the Kansas Park and Resources Authority to create the new Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (KDWP.) This was done to streamline conservation and recreational needs within one budget and department. Administration of state parks is now conducted from the Parks Division of KDWP.

The value of Kanopolis and other state parks continues to be proven over time. For the past 50 years, a central and significant theme has driven the management of Kanopolis State Park: People. This is reflected in the Department's current Parks Mission Statement – to Enhance



Kanopolis Reservoir was constructed as a flood control lake by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The 4,000 acres impoundment opened a whole new world of water recreation to Kansans. The state park facilities completed the picture.

or conserve the natural, historical, cultural, and wildlife resources, through good stewardship, while providing for quality outdoor recreation experiences. We will provide service which includes courtesy, cleanliness of facilities, protection of resources, and safety, being responsive to the needs of the people and resource.

Kanopolis, like most of the current 24 state parks, has experienced its share of ups and downs. It has endured floods, tornadoes, economic boom and bust, and changes in recreational trends. Despite these conditions, Kanopolis State Park remains one of the state's most popular attractions. Kanopolis visitors continue to enjoy a wide variety of outdoor activities including hiking, biking, horseback riding, birding, boating, fishing, and camping, among others. As demand for these outdoor experiences increases from a growing urban population, park staff continue to explore ways to meet this demand within ecological,

social, and financial limits.

This task is not easy, given that 97 percent of Kansas land is in private ownership and less than a third of the remaining three percent is available for public recreational purposes. In 2004, Kanopolis State Park visitation exceeded 240,000 people on 1,600 acres. Statewide, more than 8 million people recreated on just over 63,000 acres. Innovative thinking is needed to balance recreation, ecology, resource protection, and public demand. KDWP seeks to meet increasing demands placed on limited resources.

Of course, all of this comes with a price tag. In 1995, 60 percent of the Parks Division operating budget came from the State General Fund. Today, this level of funding has decreased to about 16 percent, with the remainder coming from user fees.


Our agenda for the next 50 years will be based on feedback from constituents and local communities. We will seek funding for new projects through grants,

partners and volunteers, and the fee program. Goals include improving customer service, expanding education and interpretation programs, and building community relation-

ships.

As I started to gather ideas for this article, the history of Kanopolis was very prominent. That is fitting, since Kanopolis is where Kansas State Parks had

their beginning. Fifty years of camping, boating, fishing, campfire stories, endless weekends and holidays with friends and family, the first fish, the first time on wooden water skis pulled behind the boat, raccoons raiding supplies left outside the tent, watching eagles in the late fall, horseback riding in Horsethief Canyon – the list of good memories goes on and on.

But the real reason for this article is to get us all to look to the future with the past in mind. KDWP Secretary Mike Hayden put it very simply: "It's the people, both inside and outside the department, who are the most important element in our past, present and future. We look forward to the challenges of the future, and building on the successes of the past." 

*On May 7, 2005, the history of Kansas state parks will be celebrated at Kanopolis State Park. Activities include guided hikes, kids fishing clinic, horse riding, a 1950s dance, and speakers, including Mike Hayden, Keith Sexson, Susan Smith, Shari Wilson, and Jerry Hover.*



Edited by Mark Shoup

## YOUTH HUNT, WIHA

Editor:

Just wanted to thank KDWP for these two fine programs. Because my boy turned 16 well before the start of the upland youth hunt, I was not able to use it until a good friend started hunting and wanted his two sons to be involved. After helping them get their hunter education, I remembered the youth hunt and took them out to western Kansas the weekend of Nov. 6 and 7.

What a perfect setting for these two boys. They saw lots of birds, got lots of shots, and even connected on several. It was also great for my dog to get some practice before opening weekend.

Because the adults were concentrating on the safety of the boys, I know they learned much. It was also nice to see them getting shots in a less crowded environment. I'm so glad you are not allowing adults to carry guns. Again, I hope KDWP keeps this program going, and I thank you for getting it started.

As for the Walk-In Hunting Areas, also many thanks for getting this program running. I have family land to hunt but know that in time it will be bought by others. With this program, I know that I will be able to continue hunting for many years to come. Now as long as the bird crop continues and farmers are getting rain on the crops, I will be blessed. Thanks, KDWP.

*G. Campbell  
Topeka*

## WHY ROADBLOCKS

Editor:

I watched the stocking of catfish at Ward-Meade Park in Topeka and also Mr. Hayden's' comment about making fishing available in urban areas to benefit those who wouldn't have a chance to fish otherwise. I wonder why, then, are taxpayer's dollars, which built the lakes and reservoirs, now being used to deny access to these same lakes and reservoirs.

I've enclosed photos, taken at Clinton Wildlife Area, of barricaded roadways. I used to be able to drive right to the lake and even launch a boat. These areas have also eliminated any camping. I enjoy these out-of-the-way areas. They might be rustic, but you're not rubbing elbows with others. There is nothing better than sitting around a campfire with family or friends, sleeping under the stars, and most of all, enjoying the sounds of nature and the closeness of God.

I spent many a weekend with my family, fishing and camping many of our rivers and streams before these lakes and reservoirs were built. I have very fond memories of these times and hate having these denied to my family. I hope that one can once again enjoy these back areas without the worry of being fined. I just want to enjoy quiet times with family and friends in the great outdoors.

Please leave these back areas open.

*Melvin Bartholomew  
Topeka*

**Mr. Bartholomew:**

**I appreciate your interest in Clinton Wildlife Area (WA) and Reservoir. My goal, as Clinton WA manager, is to make the area a place the local community can use and be proud of. I am unsure of the exact locations you are referring to; however, there is one road we seasonally close due to waterfowl migration. There also were some non-authorized pathways created by the public that have been blocked off in order to maintain the integrity of the wildlife habitat.**

**According to Kansas state law, no vehicle may drive off maintained roadways; therefore, the department closed unlawfully created roadways. The 9,200-acre Clinton WA has 18 river and lake access points. There are additional access points located in the three Army Corps of Engineers parks and the state park.**

**Camping on Clinton WA was never authorized or legal. Allowing camping**

**on the wildlife area violates KDWP's lease agreement with the Army Corp of Engineers, which specifies that the department may use the land only for wildlife management. Other reasons that camping is not permitted include the lack of bathroom facilities, trash accumulation, and illegal activities, including drug use and manufacturing that previously occurred. Recently, we have stepped up enforcement and tried to spread the word that camping is not allowed on the wildlife area by posting signs and running announcements in the local newspapers.**

**I appreciate and understand your preference for camping in isolated areas. However, due to the limited area of land dedicated to wildlife habitat and populations, and the highly populated areas surrounding Clinton WA, human interaction with wildlife is very high. Enforcing no-camping laws has already increased wildlife use of the areas. The increase in wildlife benefits people who want to hunt, fish, or view wildlife on the area.**

**Improving and maintaining quality wildlife populations is one of our highest priorities because Clinton WA is primarily funded by revenue from hunting and fishing license sales.**

**There are great camping areas located around Clinton Reservoir. If you want a more rustic camping experience, I would recommend visiting the Woodridge Army Corps Park. It is a free camping park, and they have specifically designed campsites to appeal to people who want to feel alone in the great outdoors.**

*—Deke Hobbick,  
Clinton Wildlife Area manager*

## THANKS FOR THE KIDS

Editor:

My family and several others we know would like to take a moment to thank the KDWP for changing the 2005 laws about children/hunter safety and spring turkey hunting. As a life member of the NRA and a hunter for the last 30-plus



years, I have been waiting for the chance to get my son into the field for turkey. Many other fathers are excited about it as well. I believe this will go far toward ensuring the growth of hunting sports in Kansas.

At a young age, kids these days are learning far more advanced subjects in school, and I believe they form a passion for future interests at younger ages than we did. A kid learning about hunting, wildlife, nature, safety, and respect in the field with a parent is a true family bonding – one they will never forget. This is a great move for our state and the future of hunting.

*Andrew Reiste  
Olathe*

## PRAIRIE ALLIANCE

Editor:

In the Sept./Oct. 2004 issue of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine (Page 2), there was a very enjoyable article on prairie alliances. I grew up in the heart of the Flint Hills in Emporia during the 1950s through 1970s. I can remember driving out and finding a road in the Flint Hills toward Matfield Green where there was nothing but open land: no buildings, no telephone poles, nothing. What a view and feeling that was. I also can remember when they burned the fields in anticipation of summer grazing of cattle.

Even though I have not seen the Konza Prairie yet, the Flint Hills has always had an effect on me.

Today, I am leading a prairie reconstruction effort at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Located on university property is a 110-acre nature preserve that was quickly reverting to invasive woody plants and grasses. It was a beautiful piece of property, and more than 50 acres was originally designated "prairie" but was no longer. Hundreds of alien trees and brush were quickly turning it into a very ugly scrub "prairie," and the foot traffic on the trails had almost stopped.

Finally tired of the decline, five years ago I organized a prairie reconstruction advisory committee similar to what you described in the article (Tallgrass Legacy

Alliance). Today, we have raised enough funds to purchase 20 acres of local genotype seed gathered from prairie remnants within 50 miles of Whitewater, to ensure the same representative type of prairie plants before plowing.

University students and the community have been outstanding in volunteering labor, equipment, expertise, and funds to help us reconstruct a 55-acre prairie on a former prairie site four workdays per year. Our goal is to clear and plant two to four acres per year and within five to seven years, harvest our own seed to finish the other 23 acres. We have five different types of prairie land that allows us a mix of prairie communities, from oak savanna to xeric with an estimated 150 local species (forbs and grasses) that will be planted.

We have already cleared most of the invasive woody plants and have planted eight acres that are doing very well. So many people have never truly seen the beauty of a prairie and, even though this is not a large one, we see more and more people now walking the trails and seeing the prairie wildlife that has moved back. Walkers and joggers constantly comment when they see us working how much they enjoy the preserve.

I am not a biological sciences professor but a professor of business. Most can't quite figure that out, but I explain my Kansas background and it makes sense to me.

*Richard F. James  
Whitewater, Wisconsin*

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXTREME?

Editor:

I am an environmentalist and proud of it. I have taken your magazine for many years and learn a lot from reading it, but I do object to the article by Mark Shoup entitled "Environmental Extreme" in the Nov/Dec. 2004 issue (Page 37) for many reasons.

What was the purpose of putting it in except to inflame? Those quoted were taken out of context and had nothing to do with your magazine's goals to educate people about wildlife.

You are deliberately ignoring their plea to keep the human population at a

sustainable level that would certainly help wildlife and our natural resources tremendously by humane means, which would be voluntarily curtailing our population. The writers of those quotes probably were speaking out of frustration about worldwide population gain and the severe problems it is causing to our environment, including other species.

I do not know of any environmentalist who would agree with those quotes.

We do not need *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine to enter into the present dangerous nationwide dialogue of pitting one group against another. Environmentalists have done a lot of good everywhere and do not need to be put down by your magazine. Having respect for others is a moral value.

*DeEtte Huffman  
McPherson*

**Dear Ms. Huffman:**

**I appreciate your comments and will try to respond to them. I have nothing against true environmentalists although I prefer the term "conservationists." That is why I put the term "environmentalists" in quotation marks. My point was not to put down those who wish to conserve our precious natural resources, but to point out the dangers of embracing extreme views that tend to alienate the general population and actually do harm to the cause of conservation. When people see these kinds of comments from high-profile people who, in the public's mind, represent environmental causes, they are repulsed and tend to dismiss legitimate attempts to conserve the environment.**

**I hope this clarifies my reasons for including the quotes in our magazine. I thought I had made that clear in the introduction, but perhaps I fell short.**

**–Shoup**

## KSAAP TRESPASSER PAYS \$3,000

An investigation starting in 2002 ended successfully after coordination among state and federal officers from Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. The charges involved trespassing on the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant (KSAAP) and unlawful possession of a deer transported in violation of U.S. law. An Oklahoma resident forfeited \$3,000 and his mounted deer.

The Oklahoman didn't come to Kansas with a clean record. In fact, he is banned for life from hunting in Arkansas. Unfortunately, many states like Kansas only act upon license revocations or hunting bans that they impose. [A bill passed by the Kansas Legislature this spring now allows KDWP to prevent violators from states participating in the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact from obtaining permits and licenses in Kansas. However, Arkansas does not participate in this compact.]

The man's 2002 Labette County hunt started legally on private property but eventually ended when he trespassed on KSAAP and hauled an illegal buck across federal and state lines. The 13-point buck grossed 162 inches and would have made any legal hunter proud. Instead, it was mounted and placed on display at the poacher's house in Oklahoma.

Coordination among the three state wildlife agencies and federal law enforcement officers led to a house visit

by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agent Jerry Monroe. During the visit, the suspect was interviewed and the Kansas buck eventually seized. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jan Reincke. The investigation traversing three states ended last winter when the man paid his fine and returned the mount.

KSAAP is a federal installation, so violations on KSAAP or crossing KSAAP boundaries involve federal laws and federal prosecution. This makes sense considering the important mission of KSAAP to produce and store various types of ammunition for the U.S. military. Security continues to be one of the top concerns after the September 11, 2002, attacks and ongoing conflicts around the globe.

The Lacey Act is a federal law that makes the interstate commerce (crossing state, tribal, or federal lines) in wildlife a federal crime, with fines ranging from \$1,000 to \$100,000 and/or imprisonment for each offense. Initially, this law was used to stop illegal market hunting. The law continues to be effective today at stopping many types of wildlife-related crimes.

In cases like this, successful prosecution helps protect Kansas natural resources and helps improve KSAAP security.

—Chris Deurmyer,  
natural resources  
manager, Kansas Army  
Ammunition Plant

## COWS Catch Poacher

**O**n Nov. 24, 2002, I was on patrol in Linn County on 1700 Road close to the Missouri state line. It was the last day of the Missouri deer season, and I patrolled that area frequently due to its high deer population. It gets a lot of traffic from both Missouri and Kansas deer hunters.

While driving down 1700 Road, I met a truck with Missouri plates that a woman was driving from a dead end road. It was just about dawn, and the road led to a gate at Massacre Park. I thought it was unusual that she was coming out of that area at that time of day, so I drove off the dead-end road to see if I could see anything.

About halfway up the road, I noticed two cows standing along the fence looking toward a wooded draw that ran to the west. Several other cows were coming as though someone had stopped to feed them.

I continued to the end of the road without seeing anything. When I turned around and headed back down the road, the cows were still looking up the hill to the west. The truck that I had met earlier went east on 1700 Road toward the state line, so I called in the Missouri license tag and obtained the owner's name. (Let's call him "Dave.") I had been after him for over two years for suspected illegal activity.

Then the lady drove back down the road, so I stopped her. She claimed she was lost and was looking for a certain residence in the area. I know everyone in the area, but the name she gave me was unfamiliar, so I asked her if she had dropped Dave off. She claimed she had not.

I then drove to Stateline Road and turned north to a small bridge. I looked under it but did not find anything. Next, I drove to a large open field to see if I could see anything. Seeing nothing there, I went to a barn not far off the road. Still finding nothing, I went back to the bridge. This time, I found an eight point buck head but no sign of who put it there.

I called the Linn County Sheriff's Office for a deputy to watch the bridge, so I could continue to look for my suspect. As I drove off, I saw something move in the creek, and I went over the fence and got closer. There was Dave, trying to crawl into a brush pile located on the creek bank. I took him into custody and to the Linn County Jail. When I came back later, I found his rifle and a large-bodied deer with its head cut off.

"Dave" was charged and found guilty of 11 wildlife charges, paid \$2,425 in fines and \$111 court cost, lost his hunting license for three years, and paid \$250 restitution.

He had asked me before I put him in the patrol car, "How did you know I was there." I said, "The cows, Dave, the cows."

—Terry Mills, natural resource officer, Mound City

## REFUGE SYSTEM RESUSCITATION

In a new partnership between Swarovski Optik of North America (SONA) and the National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA), the two groups are working to advance the conservation mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System, America's premier network of public lands set aside for wildlife conservation, by providing key staff and resources for refuge conservation programs.

The agreement commits Paul J. Baicich, community leader for the Swarovski Birding Project, to working directly with NWRA. The effort began in January of this year. In addition, NWRA and SONA, which have a long history of supporting conservation efforts in the United States, are exploring other ways to deepen their commitment to the refuge system.

Baicich's primary responsibility will be coordination of the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement (CARE), a coalition of 21 conservation and sporting organizations. CARE has more than 5 million members across the United States and has worked since 1995 to help the National Wildlife Refuge System fight a serious funding crisis. Recently, NWRA was selected to lead this special conservation initiative.

Besides working on conservation issues for Swarovski Birding since September 2003, Baicich is the former director of conservation and public policy for the American Birding Association (ABA); the past editor of *Birding*, the ABA's magazine; and a co-author of *A Guide to the Nests, Eggs, and Nestlings of North American Birds* (Princeton University Press, 1997).

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to protect, enhance and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System. By working with the more than 200 local refuge volunteer groups, diverse national conservation organizations, and decision-makers in Washington, D.C., NWRA supports refuges throughout the nation.

Swarovski Optik produces binoculars, telescopes, and rifle scopes for birding enthusiasts, hunters, and other wildlife observers. The company supports nature and bird conservation efforts throughout the world.

For more information, contact the National Wildlife Refuge Association at 202-333-9075 or email Baicich at paul.baicich@swarovskibirding.com.

—U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## T&E CHANGES

A few additions have been made recently to the Kansas Threatened and Endangered Species list. The silver chub, a small fish, has been added to the state's endangered species list, and two species – the Texas night snake and white-faced ibis – have been removed from the state's threatened species list.

The state's Species-In-Need-of-Conservation (SINC) list has been modified, adding the night snake, delta hydrobe (a small snail), and brindled madtom, and removing the red-shouldered hawk and eastern chipmunk.

These actions were taken at the January meeting of the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission meeting in Topeka.

—Shoup

## NEW REGULATIONS

In January, the Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission approved a number of new regulations. A regulation governing wildlife rehabilitation permits sets application, reporting, and general requirements for wildlife rehabilitation permits. The regulation establishes minimum age and knowledge level requirements for permittees, as well as mandatory examination, continuing education, inspection of facilities, wildlife care, and transfer protocols.

Boundaries for deer management units were also set. The commission approved the exclusion of landowner deer management program areas from deer management units and a slight expansion of Unit 19 to include a larger portion of the city of Leavenworth to assist urban deer management.

A regulation prohibiting the use of night vision equipment passed. The provision adds several species to existing regulations prohibiting the use of such equipment, including rabbit, squirrel, hare, furbearer, coyote, crow, prairie dog, feral pigeon, and any other huntable species. This regulation brings the hunting of all species in line with existing regulations on equipment for big game that allow only optical scopes or sights that project no visible light toward the target and do not electronically amplify visible or infrared light.

A new fishing regulation allows a \$4 three-pole permit. Anglers who purchase the three-pole permit may fish with three attended fishing rods. Without the three-pole permit, they are limited to two rods.

Another regulation creates a preference point system for limited wild turkey seasons and allows the purchase of a preference point in lieu of applying for limited deer, antelope, or wild turkey permits. The commission approved a change allowing wild turkeys to be hunted on controlled shooting areas within established seasons and with required permits. The commission also separated turkey into its own regulatory category separate from big game.





# COMPREHENSIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PLAN

**F**or many years, KDWP has used funds from the Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration acts – derived from taxes on hunting ammunition, firearms, fishing tackle, and boating fuel and gear – to manage wildlife, focusing most attention on species that are hunted or fished. These funds are also available to provide outdoor recreation access and educational programs. Funds available through the Endangered Species Act have been used for federally listed species, such as the bald eagle and black-footed ferret.

However, most of Kansas' wildlife fall in neither of these categories and have not been eligible for specific funding. Some of these species have declined dramatically over the past 50 years due to large scale changes in habitat. These "common" species are in need of study and concerted efforts to keep them from becoming rare or endangered.

In response to this issue, the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program (WCRP) was passed by Congress in 2001. In 2002, similar funds were made available through the State Wildlife Grants Program.

Funds from both programs can now be used for all wildlife and will enable KDWP to fund studies and projects to keep rare species from becoming endangered and to keep common species common. WCRP and State Wildlife Grant appropriations have been made available for federal fiscal years 2001-2004. This year, Kansas' allotment is \$905,720.

To be eligible for these funds, each state must develop a Statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan (CWCP) by Oct. 1, 2005. The plan will address eight specific elements:

1. information on the distribution and abundance of wildlife, including low and declining populations;
2. descriptions of locations and relative condition of key habitats and community types essential to conservation of species identified;

3. descriptions of problems that may adversely affect species identified or their habitats, and priority research and survey needed to identify factors that may assist in restoration and improved conservation of these species and habitats;
4. descriptions of conservation actions proposed to conserve the identified species and habitats and priorities for implementing such actions;
5. proposed plans for monitoring species identified and their habitats for effectiveness of the conservation actions proposed and for adapting these conservation actions to respond to new information or changing conditions;
6. descriptions of procedures to review the strategy at intervals not to exceed 10 years;
7. plans for coordinating the development, implementation, review, and revision of the plan with federal, state, and local agencies and Indian tribes that manage significant land and water areas within the state or administer programs that significantly affect the conservation of identified species and habitats; and
8. broad public participation in developing and implementing these plans, the projects that are carried out while these plans are developed, and the identifying of species in greatest need of conservation.

Public participation will play a large role in the formulation of this plan. KWDP invites input, questions, and comments. For more information, visit the KDWP website, [www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us).

—Ken Brunson, wildlife diversity coordinator, Pratt

The March commission meeting produced several other new regulations. Turkeys were redefined in a class by themselves, separate from big game. A new class of deer permit – nonresident Archery Whitetail Either Sex – was created. The fall turkey season was also approved, running from Oct. 1-Jan. 31, except during any firearms deer season. Supervising adults during the spring turkey youth season must now be 18 instead of the previous age of 21.

Antelope seasons were also set at the March meeting. Archery season will

run Sept. 24-Oct. 2 and Oct. 15-31. Firearm season will run Oct. 7-Oct. 10. Muzzleloader season will run Oct. 3-Oct. 10. An unlimited number of resident archery permits will be available over the counter, and 118 firearms permits will be available by drawing. Unit 2 will receive 90 permits, and Unit 17 will receive 28 permits. Thirty-eight muzzleloader permits will be available – 20 in Unit 2, 10 in Unit 17, and eight in Unit 18.

Elk seasons and permit allocations were also set. The elk archery season will run Oct. 1-Nov. 29 and Dec. 12-

Dec. 31. Firearm season will run Nov. 30-Dec. 11 and Jan. 1-March 15, 2006. On Ft. Riley, the first season segment will run Oct. 1-31, the second segment Nov. 1-31, and third segment Dec. 1-31. Muzzleloader season will be Sept. 1-30. Ten Any Elk permits will be offered. Five Antlerless-Only Elk permits will be authorized for each of the hunting segments on Ft. Riley. Unlimited Hunt-Own-Land elk permits were authorized. The application deadline for limited elk permits is July 15.

—Mathews

## Kansas Army Ammunition Plant

This year, the Kansas Army Ammunition Plant, near Parsons, will conduct three special hunts on the facility's 13,727 acres. Hunts may be cancelled at any time due to security concerns.

**Archery, 25 hunters** – All hunters must be at least 16 years old and have successfully completed a hunter education course. All hunters are required to attend a pre-hunt safety/security briefing on Sept. 29. Successful applicants must pay a \$50 federal access fee.

Applicants may apply in pairs, and applications must include hunt preference (archery), full name, driver's license number, social security number, birth date, address, and phone number on a postcard or 3x5 index card. Applications should be addressed to Commander's Representative, KSAAP, ATTN: SJMKS-NR, 23018 Rooks Road, Parsons, KS 67357. Incorrect entries will

not be accepted. Be sure to specify the hunt you are applying for. Only successful applicants will be notified by mail.

Crossbows are not allowed. Hunters may harvest no more than two does and one buck but must harvest an adult doe (not a fawn) prior to harvesting a buck. Hunters must have hunting license and appropriate deer permits. Game tags are allowed.

The application deadline is Aug. 19. The archery hunt will run Oct. 1-Nov.30.

**Muzzleloader, 20 hunters** – Application rules are the same as above except that applicants must indicate "muzzleloader" on the application.

Muzzleloader hunters must use a muzzleloader. Hunters may harvest no more than one doe.

The deadline for muzzleloader hunt applications is Oct. 28. The antlerless-only muzzleloader hunts will be conducted Dec. 2-4.

**Quail Hunt, 10 groups (total of 20 hunters)** – Applications are the same as for the other two hunts except

that applicants must indicate "quail" on the application. Applicants are encouraged to apply in pairs.

Quail hunters may use dogs and must use a shotgun with bird shot. Hunters may harvest up to the state bag limit on quail.

The deadline for quail applications is Oct. 28. The hunt will be conducted Dec. 16-17. For more information, phone 620-421-7427.

–Shoup

## Bushy-tail Summer

Although squirrel season runs June 1-Feb. 28, 2006, and squirrel hunters are more active in fall and winter, early-season hunters love being out in shirt sleeves.

Most hunters use .22 rifles and hunt fruit-bearing mulberry trees in June. Squirrels can also be found foraging on mushrooms and ash and maple seeds and even the ends of new branches. Patience, quiet, and stealth

are critical for squirrel hunters at this time, when the trees are in full foliage. They must use their ears as much as their eyes; squirrels can often be located by the sounds they make, from noisy chattering to scrambling through trees. Even the sound of a squirrel chewing can tip a hunter off.

Moving quietly through the trees, hunters move and wait, stopping in one spot for 10 minutes or so. It's best to set up in good cover or at the base of a tree, preferably somewhere with a good rifle rest in view of a large fruit- or nut-bearing tree. Wait patiently, and the sound of squirrels will likely be heard. Occasionally, bushy-tails will come into range while foraging and can be seen before they are heard. Once a squirrel is heard, however, the hunter must move toward the sound. But be careful; try to spot it before moving. It can be closer or farther away than it sounds.

Use the cover of another tree to move into position, then slip around the trunk and use it for a rest. Avoid shooting offhand. If nothing appears, move on and repeat the process.

Calling can bring squirrels right to you. The primary call is a squirrel distress call, which can pull your curious quarry in. A chatter or bark call can bring closer those squirrels that respond to a distress call but won't come into range. Another call simply makes the sound of a squirrel chewing a nut. All work well in summer.

Both fox and grey squirrels can be found in Kansas. The daily bag limit is five squirrels, and the possession limit is 10.

–Shoup

## WAY outside

BY BRUCE COCHRAN



SUMMER WAS ALWAYS A SAD TIME FOR HENRIETTA THE HOMELY HEN.



# Perplexing Parents



by Mark Shoup

lay Dad's rod on the deck of the pumphouse and stretched out for a snooze. Shortly, I dreamt of sailing on a gentle Caribbean breeze when a *clink, clunk* sound brought me back to Kansas. Dad's rod and reel had disappeared.

Panicked, I ran to the other side of the pumphouse, thinking I might have set the

**F**or a kid, knowing what to expect from parents can be as perplexing as learning to shut a refrigerator door. My first memory of contradictory adult behavior came when I was about four years old.

My father loved opening of dove season and looked forward to it as if it were a national holiday. Each September, he would return from the traditional evening hunt with a bag full of birds, and I would be waiting in the alley. Most kids like yucky stuff, and I was typical, fascinated as he pulled off wings and heads and neatly breasted out the birds.

After rinsing off feathers in a saucepan, he would put the birds in the kitchen sink, ready for Mom to cook. Although Mom always grumbled about errant feathers, she cheerfully pressure-cooked them, removed breasts from bone, and made the most delicious dove pies on Earth. She seemed to enjoy cooking, serving, and dining on this feast almost as much as Dad did bringing it home. So when it came to birds, there seemed to be agreement between Mom and Dad.

With these thoughts in mind, one warm September weekend I trapped a house sparrow in the hollow of a tree. With my four-year-old mind ticking, I seized the opportunity to please my mother and make Dad proud. I promptly dispatched the bird and neatly dressed it out, just like Dad. I knew it wasn't a dove, but it looked like it might do nicely in a pie – like four and 20 blackbirds. It was smaller, but it looked the same. With hose in hand, I sought to make things even better by washing the breast, removing every feather.

At this point, my mother stepped out the back door, and I proudly held up my contribution to family table fare. Much to my dismay, Mom freaked.

"What is THAT!" she shrieked. "Where did you get it?"

"It's a birdie, Mom," I explained anxiously. "I thought you could make a pie."

Mom's face wrinkled up as if she had

just gotten a big whiff of skunk, which I couldn't understand because it smelled just like dove to me. She turned and waved her hand as if to say, *Get that thing out of here!*, which is exactly what she did say.

Confused and disappointed, I trudged to the garden and buried the ill-fated bird. *What's got into Mom?* I thought.

Something wasn't computing here, but the next evening, to my delight, Dad took me on the hunt. While waiting for birds to fly, I got my first lesson in wildlife conservation and hunting ethics. Unlike Mom, Dad seemed to have a twinkle in his eye as he explained things. While it didn't make much sense to my four-year-old mind, I accepted it and looked forward to my eighth birthday, when Dad said he'd get me a shotgun. Four years, however, seemed like eternity. I might not live that long.

Another encounter with the fickle nature of adults occurred several years later, after I lived long enough to get that shotgun and bring home real game. I loved to fish the local sandpit near town. One day, I slipped my dad's best casting rod and reel from the shelf, thinking it would bring good luck.

With a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a canteen of water, and a can of worms packed in Dad's WWII musket bag, I walked a mile or so to the sandpit, my old metal tackle box and Dad's rod in hand. My favorite fishing spot was a floating pumphouse in the middle of the pit. I hopped across a pontoon walkway to a deck that circled the pumphouse. It was the perfect place to fish, right over deep water in a spot that provided shade for fish on hot summer days. If the fishing was slow, I had plenty of room to stretch out and take a nap. On this day, such was the case.

I tried different depths without luck, so I tied a slip sinker on my line, loaded my hook with worms, and dropped the bait to the bottom. Then I made a mistake that I later thought would bring certain death. I

rod there. It was gone. I just slumped on the deck and stared at the green water, wondering if I would be better off jumping or gathering my gear and heading to Dad's hardware store to fess up. It could have been minutes or hours before I finally decided to take my chances on the latter course.

Dad was helping a customer when I slinked in the store. In my altered state of consciousness, I made my second mistake.

"Dad," I interrupted. Dad threw me a quick scowl and continued with his customer. I just plopped down on an old footstool and waited for the worst.

When Dad was finished, he walked over to me, but I didn't look at him. "You know better than to interrupt me when I'm waiting on someone, son. Now what do you need?"

Tears welling in my eyes, I described the tragic saga, with as many "I'm-sorrys" as I felt I could get away with. There was a deathly moment of silence before Dad spoke.

"Well, darn," Dad said matter-of-factly. "I'll give John Hall a call and see if they can fetch it out with a drag line. You go on home and get ready for supper." I ran out the door and all the way home without stopping. You can bet that I was confused again, and I wasn't ruling out divine intervention.

Then the unbelievable happened. Dad returned from work with his rod and reel in hand. The folks at the sandpit had fished it out with a clawhook on a dragline.

"Clean it up, son," was all he said. No execution, no lecture, not even an injunction to never use his fishing gear again!

So who can figure adults? I still can't. But somehow I feel that rod and reel did bring good luck, as perplexing as that may seem.



**F**ishing is an activity enjoyed by millions of people. It doesn't matter if you're young or old, boy or girl, big or small, you can enjoy the rewards of fishing. Although some people have expensive, fancy fishing equipment, you don't have to spend much. And until you're 16 years old, you don't have to buy a Kansas fishing license.

You can buy a relatively inexpensive fishing pole at most discount or specialty stores. Start with a spincast rod and reel. It's maintenance-free and easy to cast and handle. Most are already spooled with 8-pound line, which works well for species from bluegill and channel catfish to largemouth bass.

You can use lures or bait. Artificial baits, or lures, include jigs, spinners, plugs, and spoons made to imitate fish

and insects sportfish eat. Natural baits include worms, minnows, and prepared baits. These are the best choices for beginners because they'll catch many different species of fish.

A good all-round hook is a #10, which holds natural bait well. A small split shot sinker can be crimped about 1 inch above the hook to add some casting weight. A bobber can be used to detect bites and adjusted to fit fishing depth.

You've got a pole, bait, and tackle, so you're all set to go. But where do you go? Most of the state's larger cities have urban fishing programs, sponsored by KDWP, where area ponds are stocked every two weeks with catchable-sized

channel catfish from April through September. The ponds that are stocked and open to public fishing are listed in the *Kansas Fishing Atlas*, available at most KDWP offices or by requesting one through the KDWP website, [www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us). This atlas not only shows urban fishing spots but virtually every place in the state to dip a line.

Also, be sure to pick up a copy of the *Kansas Fishing Regulations Summary*, available wherever licenses are sold, so you'll know what length and creel limits apply.

So what happens if you catch a fish? You've got two options. You can either

release the fish to be caught another day or keep it to eat (assuming it's of legal size). Fresh fish makes fine table fare, and you don't have to be an expert chef to make fish taste good. A common way to cook most fish is to dip the filets or the entire cleaned fish in egg and milk and then roll it in flour or corn meal. Then fry on each side to a golden brown in a small amount of oil.

If Mom or Dad doesn't fish, ask them if it's okay if a relative or friend takes you fishing. No matter where you go, be careful around water. It's a good idea for young anglers to wear a life jacket while fishing, even from the bank.

The next time you're sitting around with nothing to do, plan a fishing trip. Once you a catch fish, you'll be hooked.

—Murrell

## Fishermen Get Bit, Too

As spring gets into full swing, biting insects of all kinds emerge. If you're a fisherman, this means that while you're waiting for a bite, you just might get bitten yourself. A wet spring could make bug problems worse. However, a little precaution can make outdoor outings bug-free, leaving the angler to concentrate on bites he wants. Following are a few tips:

- cover skin as completely as possible by wearing long sleeves, shoes, and tucking pant legs into socks;

- wear khaki or neutral colors because mosquitoes are attracted to dark colors, especially blue;



- bugs and bees are attracted to residue left by heavily-scented soap, lotion, and shampoo, so these should be avoided when an outdoor excursion is anticipated;

- use insect repellent and follow label instructions. Don't apply to the hands of children who tend to put their fingers in their mouths. Bathe to remove repellent;

- many of Kansas biting bugs are active at dawn and dusk, so be especially prepared if fishing at these times; and

- after returning indoors, check for bites and ticks. If a tick is found, carefully remove it by grasping the head with tweezers and gently pulling straight out. Clean the bite with hydrogen peroxide. If the area gets red and swollen or flu symptoms occur within 30 days, which could be indicators of Lyme disease, contact your physician.

—Murrell

## A FISH IN EVERY CREEL

### Don Patton, Pratt

**Age:** 65

**Education:** El Dorado, Barton County, and Pratt Community colleges, emphasis in biology; study in fish disease at Mississippi State

**Years of Service:** 44 – Sept. 1, 1958-March 30, 2002; two years part-time since retirement

**Original Hometown:** El Dorado, Kansas

**Positions Held:** fish culturist I and II, assistant Pratt Hatchery manager, Pratt Hatchery manager (34 years)

**Most Admired Employee:** his supervisor Myron Howard and hatchery manager Seth Way

**Toughest assignment:** "The changes in methods of hatching fish. Moving from the early hatching methods to modern methods was always a challenge, as was integrating old culture techniques with new species of fish."

**Most Important Issue Facing KDWP in the 21st Century:** "I think the agency is in very good hands. It's just a matter of providing the recreation and letting everyone know what's available out there – what Wildlife and Parks does, what they have to offer – and making sure it gets funded. Just keep up with modern techniques to keep up with the demands to provide the sportsman with a catchable product."

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** To celebrate the 100th anniversary of our agency, this and the following three issues of *Kansas Wildlife & Parks* magazine's "Nature" page will be devoted to profiles of retired, long-time employees of the agency, folks who dedicated their lives to the nature this page usually features.



Patton knew early in life that he wanted to work in fisheries biology. He almost groomed himself for it in school activities, and several key players reinforced his interest in the field.

"In high school, I was president of the sportsmen's club my junior and senior years," Patton explains. "I had many speakers from the Kansas Fish and Game Commission come to our club, so I was acquainted with quite a few of the employees. Fred Warders was a game protector in Wichita at that time, and he later became assistant director, so I knew him. When he became assistant director, he notified me of a fish culturist position in Pratt, so I came out and interviewed."

Thus, the stage was set for one of the longest careers in agency history. When Patton started working as a fish culturist at the Pratt Hatchery, Alaska and Hawaii were not yet states, and no American had flown into space, much less walked on the moon. By the time he retired, desktop computers had become as important as fish nets in the state's hatchery system.

But it was product more than process that inspired Patton's fondest memories.

"Producing fish for the Kansas angler gave me more satisfaction than anything," says Patton. "Just the thought that my work helped create fishing opportunities statewide really meant a lot to me. That and the many relationships I had with other people."

As with any job, however, there were obstacles to overcome, especially as technology evolved and new species of fish were introduced. "The most difficult species to deal with was the striped bass. Because they are anadromous fish in their native habitat [living in salt water but spawning in freshwater streams], they're a lot more sensitive than most fish we deal with. There's not that many available, and getting the adults to produce the eggs in the hatchery can be tough. There's such a narrow timeframe to get the eggs and get them fertilized. Also, the plankton food chain that it takes to raise them from fry to fingerling is very delicate.

"Stripers and wipers are just much more technical to work with," he continues. "Especially the reciprocal wiper. He's even tougher because he's smaller

and tougher to raise. [Reciprocal wiper is a striped bass male and a white bass female cross.] But once we got the system down, anglers had a very special new opportunity, particularly with the wiper because it gets to a good size and is a tremendous fighter."

Although retired, Patton hasn't lost his passion for the business of raising fish. "I had 44 wonderful years, and I still enjoy going back. I'm glad they use my experience from those 44 years, so I can come back and help them raise fish at Meade each spring. I look forward to it very much."

And this year makes 47 years of hatching fish for Patton. With millions of channel catfish, black bass, striped bass, bluegill, sauger, saugeye, wiper, and walleye stocked from KDWP's hatcheries each year, one can only imagine how many anglers have been blessed by Patton's long commitment to fishing in Kansas.

If the motto of Herbert Hoover's 1928 campaign was "A chicken in every pot," Patton's would be "A fish in every creel." And he delivered.

—Shoup

## ON THIS DAY

**Coyote bounty** – By an act of the 1941 Legislature, coyotes are again worth \$1 per head as bounty payment. The new bounty law permits the counties to make the payments for which they will be reimbursed by the state. The bounty is payable at the offices of the county clerk. –*Kansas Fish & Game*, May 1941

**Deer hunting illegal** – Perhaps we should have told you that it is illegal to hunt deer in Kansas. Three hunters recently were apprehended by game protectors and charged with pursuing and killing Kansas deer. Two [of the poachers were caught] by game protector Rickel and one by game protector Andrew. This probably accounts for the state's entire deer supply. –*Kansas Fish & Game*, February 1942

**Gun and shell rationing** – The opportunity to take ducks will be reduced greatly because of national defense priorities and rationing. On Feb. 23, the government placed a "freezing" order on guns, including the hunters' favorite 12-gauge shotgun. The same order restricted or limited the sale of shotgun shells. Under the new regulation, sporting goods dealers are limited to 70 percent of the shells delivered them in 1940.

Many sportsmen, particularly those who remember the hunter's plight during the last world war, have laid in a supply of shells for the 1942 season. We have suggested that readers of *Kansas Fish & Game* buy their shells early and have the guns well oiled before anything comes – be it ducks or be it Japanese.

–*Kansas Fish & Game*, March 1942

KANSAS WILDSCAPE  
ANNOUNCES NEW WEBSITE

Kansas Wildscape Foundation has announced the creation of a new website – [www.kansaswildscape.org](http://www.kansaswildscape.org) – which will feature the organization's projects and fundraising activities, as well as informa-

KWF  
AWARDS

Pictured below are the winners of the Kansas Wildlife Federation 2004 awards.

**Front row, left to right:** Steve Haslouer, Water Conservationist; Ed Augustine, Outdoor Skills Instructor; Gail Garber, Stream Monitor; Bob Gress, Conservationist of the Year; Matt Nowak, President's Award; and Loren Graff, Land and Soil Conservationist;

**Back row, left to right:** Mark Sexson, Wildlife Conservationist; Dave Bryan, Farmer/Rancher Wildlife Conservationist; Ray Aslin, Forest Conservationist; Neil Danielson, Conservation Communicator; Mike Rader, Conservation Educator; and John Strickler for the Nature Conservancy Kansas, Conservation Organization.

–*Shoup*



tion on how people can be more involved in these efforts.

Kansas Wildscape, a 501 c (3) organization, was founded in 1991 in coordination with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP). The foundation is dedicated to raising funds and accepting other tax deductible donations to benefit wildlife and outdoor recreation needs in Kansas. Current projects include the building of rental cabins at state parks, Outdoor Kansas for Kids (OKKids) programs, and helping KDWP, Ft. Hays State University, and other organizations build the Kansas Wetlands Educational Center at Cheyenne Bottoms.

The foundation's annual fundraiser, the Governor's Golfing and Fishing Classic, will be held at Milford Reservoir

and Rolling Meadows Golf Course in Junction City on June 16-17.

The public is invited to visit this new website for more information on current projects and events and for details on how to become a member.

– *Debbie Brandt, director of Member Services and Administration, Kansas Wildscape Foundation*





# For the Birds: Gross and Yucky Stuff

Maybe you've pondered the age old question "Which came first — the chicken or the egg?" But have you ever wondered how birds keep cool? Who cleans up after the young? Can birds throw-up?

Birds are a fascinating group of animals that have been around for a long time. Kansas is home to more than 415 different kinds of birds. Some live here all year long, and others just visit for a short time. As you might expect, birds do many things differently than people. Some of these things

might even be considered strange, disgusting, gross, or yucky. However birds do things, the reasons they do them has to do with helping nature work and helping the animals to survive. The facts below may seem gross or yucky to you, but remember, nature works in fascinating ways.

Did you know that turkey vultures poop on their legs to cool off? Sound disgusting? It is to us, but staying cool is very important if you live in a hot environment. Can you imagine wearing a feather coat

on a hot summer day and wanting to cool off? Vulture poop is very watery and as the water evaporates, or dries up, it leaves the legs feeling cool — just like when sweat evaporates off your skin after you have been playing ball on a hot day. Vultures don't sweat, so they need other ways to cool off. Another reason some scientist believe vultures poop on their legs is that it may help to sterilize or kill any bacteria on their legs. Vultures may stand on the carcass of a rotting animal while "dining," and you can imagine the bacteria they might be standing in.

Did you know that owls throw up about eight hours after they eat? They throw up a dry pellet made of the bones and fur of the animal they've eaten. Owls and other raptors may eat every part of their prey, including all the hard parts like bones, toenails, teeth, tail, and fur or feathers. They can't digest all the hard parts. The stuff they can't digest is

**Owl Pellet**



**Fecal Sac**



formed into a sausage-shaped pellet and coughed up.

Pellets can provide many clues about what owls and other birds of prey eat. Owls and hawks aren't the only birds to produce pellets. Crows, wading birds, gulls, and even songbirds produce pellets. Their pellets may contain shell fragments of insects, fish scales, or indigestible seeds.

Did you know that some birds drink "milk" from their parent's mouth? Imagine sticking your head inside your mother or father's mouth to get your dinner. Is that gross or what? Well, not if you're a pigeon or a dove. During the breeding season, the lining of the crop in these birds produces a special milky substance that is used to feed the young. This "pigeon's milk" is derived from liquid-filled cells lining the crop that are shed by both the males and females. Rich in fats and proteins, it is the perfect food for a young pigeon or dove. The young are fed this "milk"

for 5 to 10 days after hatching. When the "milk" production is over, the young begin eating regurgitated seeds or fruits directly from both parents.

Many adult birds, including cuckoos, woodpeckers, songbirds, herons, egrets, pelicans, hummingbirds, and many more feed their nestlings in this manner. Feeding by regurgitation allows adults to carry more food each time and helps the young digest the food more easily.

Did you know that some mother birds carry poop in their mouths? Now you are thinking, "That's the limit for me." But parents of many songbirds carry away the poop of the nestlings instinctively when they visit the nest to feed the young. Poop, more properly called feces, produced by nestlings is enclosed in a tough, gelatin-like sac that is small, whitish, and black-tipped. This neat little package is called a fecal sac, and the parents either eat them or carry them away



as they leave the nest. As the young grow older, they instinctively back to the edge of the nest to poop over the side. Watch out below!

Parents also carry away the eggshells of newly hatched young, and in their zeal to keep the nest clean of any foreign objects, parents have been known to throw newly banded nestlings over the edge to get rid of the "shiny" (and unnatural) object on the leg of their young. One bird bander watched a red-eyed vireo (whose nestlings he had just banded), drag three of her young out of the nest; he put the young back in the nest, and by the next morning, the female had gotten used to the bands and did not react to them.

For more fascinating facts about nature's yucky stuff, check out the book by LeeAnn Landstrom and Karen I. Shragg entitled *Nature's Yucky*. For more information about Kansas wildlife, stop by the Milford Nature Center in Junction City.



**Tern regurgitating food for its young.**



# Backlash

by Mike Miller

## A Lake By Any Other Name

No matter what you call it, a lake is a lake. The fish don't care. But most Kansas lakes have relatively bland names. Some are named for a nearby tiny town, or one the water covered up. I suppose the name was meant as consolation to those who lost their town site. A few reservoirs bear the name of a creek or river that runs in, and one or two are named for local dignitaries. There are some lesser-known local names, though, with more character. Glen Elder is called Waconda locally, an Indian name for a spring that once bubbled up. I like that name.

I fished a sprawling Canadian shield lake where guides had an interesting name for one bay. They told a story of a guide, 30 years before, who always brought his clients to the dock with fish, even on the toughest days. When asked about where he was fishing, he'd give an ornery grin and say, "Just me know." One day a guide secretly followed the oldtimer and watched him negotiate a tricky narrows between two islands. Later, the guide found that the narrows led to a huge, hidden bay loaded with fish. From that day on, the bay was known as Justameeno Bay. Now there's a name for you.

Lennie gave a high mountain lake in Colorado a colorful name after one of our more adventurous trips. Stub invited us to go, and he told vivid stories about huge cutthroat trout on every other cast. It was good, he said, because it was a five-mile hike *up*. We went out Memorial Day weekend and fished for a couple of days in small streams. We had a ball catching small brookies, browns, and rainbows, but we were dreaming of 16-inch cutthroats.

Our first mistake was not getting any local information. Being true Kansas flatlanders, it never crossed our minds that the end of May was a little early to fish high mountain lakes. It was warm at 8,000 feet, at least during the day. Blinded by Stub's stories, we drove to the wilderness area and signed in, which was daunting. The sign-in sheet asked for our names, when we left and we planned to return, in case we didn't.

"It's only five miles," Stub said. "Piece of cake."

It was some nasty cake! It took us half-an-hour just to find the trailhead. There hadn't been any foot traffic since the previous fall, and we wandered aimlessly around on a mountainside before finally locating a faintly discernable trail. It didn't phase Stub, and he took off like a mountain goat, enjoying, I'm sure, Lennie's and my consternation.

We followed, trying to keep Stub in sight. At the midway point, Stub was sitting on a rock just finishing his sandwich when Lennie and I caught up. We flopped down,

gasping as our lungs desperately tried to locate oxygen in our breaths.

"You guys want to lay around, or get up there and start fishing?" Stub said as he readied his daypack.

Neither Lennie nor I could talk, but our creative sign language easily communicated to Stub that we wanted to rest.

"Okay, okay," he said. "I just figured you two die-hards wouldn't want to burn daylight when we could be catching giant cutthroats."

On the second leg of our hike, we made a grim discovery: snow. Deep drifts blocked the trail. We weren't dressed for snow and after plowing through several drifts, we were wet and cold. The higher we climbed, the harder the wind blew, too. But we finally found water.

"We're here!" Lennie gasped, falling to his knees.

Stub was already standing on the shore, hands on hips, staring into a small, shallow mudhole.

"This ain't it," he said.

"Let's fish here anyway," Lennie pleaded. "It could be loaded with fish."

"You wimps fish here if you want. I'm going to catch cutthroats."

With that, we were off, eventually stringing out for 200 yards. I kept Stub in sight in front and Lennie in sight behind. Finally, in the distance ahead, I could just make out Stub standing on the shore of another lake.

"This has to be it," Lennie wheezed. "Even if it isn't, I'm not going any fur . . ."

Lennie's voice cut off as he crested the ridge and saw what Stub and I were already staring at: a beautiful high mountain lake that was covered with ice.

We sat dumfounded on the rocks, trying to keep out of the biting wind. Lennie wanted to make a fire, and we had matches, but with little dry wood and the relentless wind, we never got it started. It was a long trek down, but at least it was *down*. We ended the day on the lower elevation streams and caught a few more brookies and browns before it was time to pack up, but Lennie's sour mood never improved. Even after we were back in the cabin, warm and dry, Lennie made it clear that he was unhappy about our little trek.

"Just so you two know, I'm never going back to — to — Tuehlanback. That's what it is," he stammered. "It's Lake Tuehlanback. Never again. Understand?"

Lennie was right, and the name stuck, at least with us. And we've never been back.



